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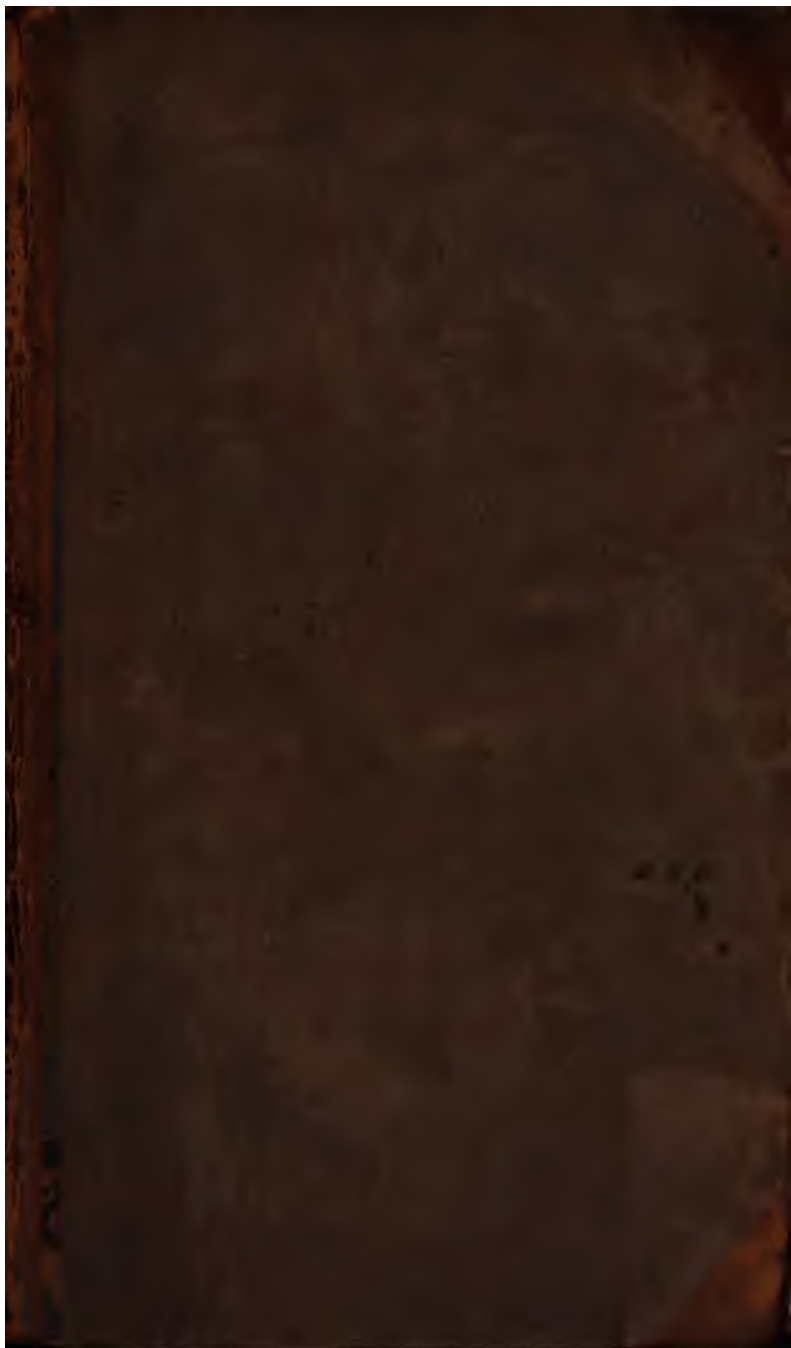
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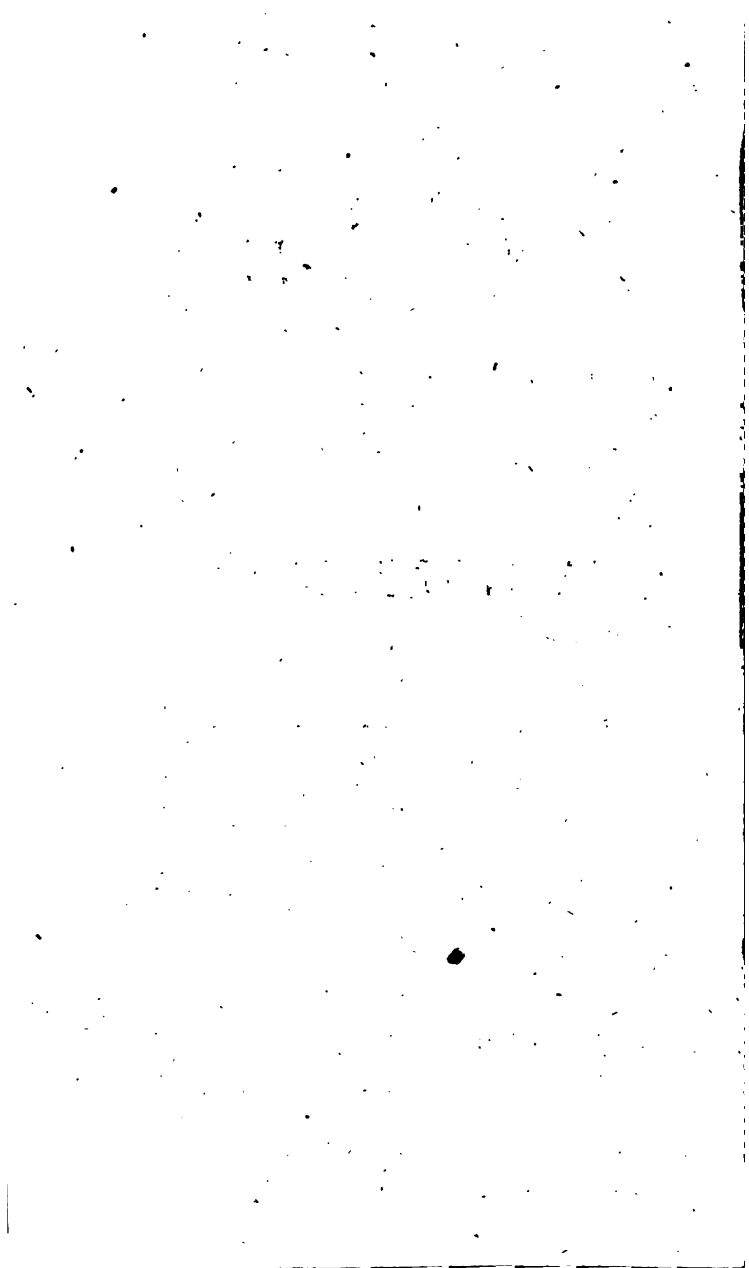
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**A L U R E D U S.**

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**ALUREDUS,**  
**KNIGHT OF MALTA.**

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IN THREE VOLUMES.

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VOL. III.

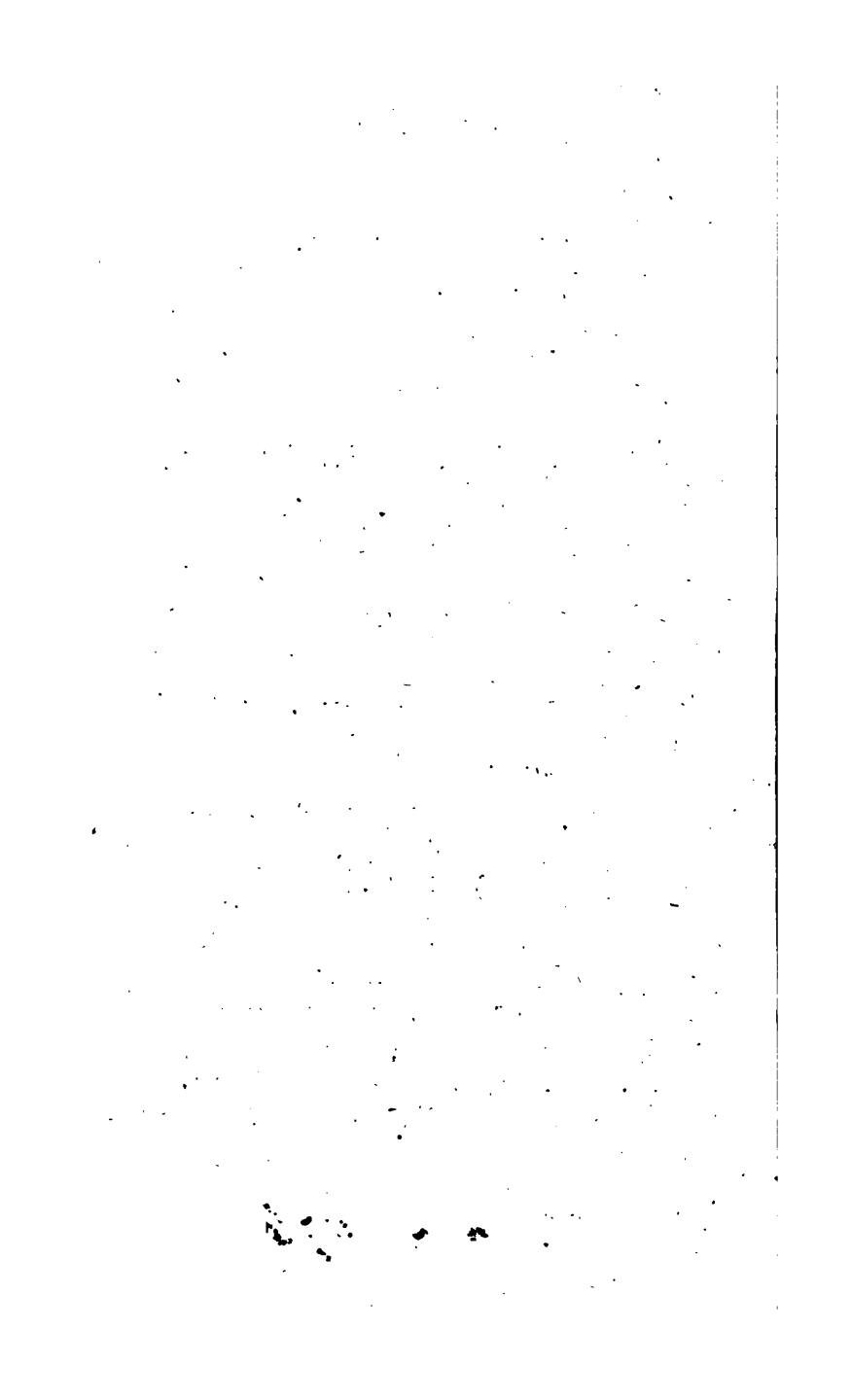
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# A L U R E D U S.

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## LETTER XXII.

*Olivia to Mrs. Selwin.*

South Audley-Street.

**Y**OU command me, dearest Madam, to speak no more of obligations; you tell me you are satisfied with the assurances I have given you of endeavouring to deserve your friendship. If my tongue is imposed silence, if I am obliged to restrain my pen, from expressing the emotions of my heart, still I will find out methods to demon-



strate my gratitude. When for a moment I forget the interest of your happiness, or suffer my vigilance to slumber where my watchfulness might ward off a blow levelled at your peace, or threatening to the honour of your family, that moment may I be thrown from your esteem, that moment may I be a bankrupt even in hope ! may the idea of every tender friend, may every comfortable reflection be blotted from my memory ! be it faithful only to such events in my past life as I least wish to remember ! may Heaven itself, repenting of its goodness, no longer make me the object of its care ; or you, my dear Mrs. Selwin, the instrument of its divine protection ! May I return to all the horrors of that situation from which you raised me, without innocence to support

support me against the attacks of poverty, against the efforts of despair ! Shall not the comforts of my benefactress, be my comforts ? Shall not her disquietudes be my disquietudes ? It would be presumptuous in me to examine into the part you have assigned me ; the rectitude of your heart is the best security I can have for the propriety of my actions.—There was but one circumstance that would have put it out of my power to convince you of my obedience ; fortunately that one has not occurred. Had Lady Mortington made me the confidant of her sentiments, and those sentiments been derogatory to virtue, on no consideration could I have submitted either to act the part of a spy and betray the trust she reposed in me, or to have lived the guilty partner of her inclinations ;

clinations ; my own reputation, low as I am reduced by fortune, requires that I should cautiously guard it equally from the imputation of treachery, and the appearance of levity. A young woman who will condescend to share the criminal secrets of her superior, becomes a partner in her indiscretions :—in such a case, I must have declined the honour of her Ladyship's protection ; I must have secured my peace and character, by leaving Lord Mortington's family :—it would have been my only resource against my either receiving or betraying her confidence. To have connived at guilt, or, assassin-like, to have turned those weapons she had put into my hands against her own bosom, my soul would have disclaimed. I thank God ! my good, kind, Mrs. Selwin, I  
thank

thank God! I have none of those difficulties to deter me from a strict observance of your commands, and shall feel no repugnance in obeying them minutely. Hitherto I have not been able to discover any thing faulty, or even exceptionable in the conduct of your daughter. Indeed, Madam, I flatter myself you have drawn a too hasty conclusion, from the eagerness her Ladyship expressed for coming to town. Your apprehensions have also been inflamed by a vile officious incendiary, whose production is evidently that of envy, jealousy, or some such mean degrading principle.

I am so much confined to my own apartment, as well from inclination, as because Lady Mortington does not importune me to mix in company, that

B 3.

I have

I have yet had few opportunities of fixing my suspicions on any particular person.—There is a certain lady of quality they have glanced over. Chance once threw her in my way. She is a constant visitor at this house, and professes a romantic friendship for Lady Mortington, which, with some other circumstances, has made her the object of my no very favourable observation. I have experienced her talent for giving pain. A person of distinction, who, unprovoked, can calmly insult the unfortunate, wants that generosity of soul, that humanity of disposition, which sets the lowest child of poverty above the debasement of being suspected; and I think I do not judge harshly, in supposing such a person would not spare even the tender bosom of a parent. Lord and Lady Mortington,

ton, I assure you, Madam, are not the most dissatisfied couple in the world; there is a great deal of complaisance observed on her side; I hope time will effect much more. The exertion of a little preference, a little tenderness, will at any time warm those seeds of gentleness which nature has sown in the heart of Lord Mortington. I am convinced it will be in the Countess's power, not only to mould him as she pleases, but also to eradicate that reserve which has hitherto marked the features of his temper with unpleasing—at least, what the world have called unpleasing—characters. His Lordship, before he was connected with Lady Mortington, was arrived at that time of life when it is most difficult to unbend the mind; or new-model a disposition that the rust of a single life had rather inclined to

that of a humourist. Unmarried men contract a thousand habits, which, in a more social situation, would have been avoided: for want of domestic companions, they are apt to consult their own humour, on every occasion, and, perhaps, that humour often misleads them against their better judgment. Lord Mortington's soul is rich in kindness, benevolence, and humanity. I should be the most ungrateful creature breathing, if I did not acknowledge those excellent qualities, which, in his whole behaviour to me, I have so abundantly experienced. The Countess has quite recovered her health and strength: she was yesterday presented at court: her lovely person could receive no addition from ornaments, though, I believe, the magnificence of her appearance was scarcely ever equalled.

From

From the moment she left her dressing-room to the moment she stepped into her chair, the good Earl's eyes never wandered; they were fixed on her charming face with such expressions of transport, as if she alone had been the deity of his adoration, the being on whose smile depended his felicity; neither did he confine his admiration to silence, or her Ladyship seem dissatisfied with his praises. I sometimes hope she is not insensible to Her Lord's attentions; at others, she obliges me to change my opinion; but I have never yet had the least cause to suspect that the preference she neglects to shew him is given to another. I scarcely ever saw, read, or heard of, a woman having so absolute a command over the passions of the other sex, that could receive the devoirs of a lover, or the

effusions,



effusions of a husband's fond approbation, with equal unconcern. If your daughter is not affected by the unwearied assiduities of her Lord, trust me, Madam, her heart is fortified with the same impregnable indifference against the attacks of a lover, even though that lover should be Lord Derwent.

Ever since I received your first commands, I have made the intricate windings of Lady Mortington's heart my constant study, and think I may now venture to pronounce, there are but few shades by which its virtues are obscured; she wants sensibility but on one occasion; you, my dearest Mrs. Selwin, will be best able to define for what good purposes Providence has furnished

furnished the Countess's heart with so small a proportion of susceptibility.

Lord Derwent is often the subject of Lord Mortington's conversation; he speaks of him without reserve; he declares him the most sensible, elegant, and accomplished of any of the young nobility, admires his improvements, enlarges even on his personal attractions, and pronounces him a man of honour. The Countess hears him with as little emotion as if he was talking of a brother; she neither affirms nor contradicts; she affects not to avoid hearing his praises, nor does she listen to them with any degree of pleasure; she is never less discomposed; not a sigh or a blush contradicts the reality of her composure. Repeated visits have already passed between the two Earls.

Lady Mortington has sometimes partaken of those from Lord Derwent; but I cannot discern the least alteration either in her humour or spirits, after she has been in his company. I am very particular, my dear Madam, that you may restore peace to your soul, from knowing circumstantially on what reasons I found my hopes that your daughter's conduct will give you no essential cause for unhappiness.

Her Ladyship told me this morning, with a lively pleasure that charmed me, of your intentions to meet her at Mortington Castle. She speaks of you and of her father with unusual tenderness; her heart, I am sure, is innocent; and I make no doubt, but those blossoms of the mind will expand themselves in a later season, which, in the spring of her

Her life, have been nipped by a too early and too intimate intercourse with a world, whose examples are pernicious to the principles of strict rectitude.

Trust, Madam, the accounts I send you; for even your ease, the dearest to me of all other considerations, I would not flatter at the expence of truth. If my intelligence can have the power to alleviate your afflicting apprehensions, how great the reward of my obedience! Few, very few, confer obligations like Mrs. Selwin. There are none whose gratitude and affection to their benefactress can equal that of her Olivia.

LETTER

## LETTER XXIII.

*Lord Derwent to Sir Philip West.*

Hill-Street.

**S**UPPOSE, dear Philip, a young man of tried abilities, with whom you are well acquainted, should form a design of following your lead, and enter into the service of his country : Would you encourage his intentions, or have you a vacancy to offer, in your own regiment, by which he may climb the ladder of preferment? Pity, the best materials in the world for making a great  
General,

General, should be buried in the grave of common acquirement, or moulder in the lap of luxury.—Were I even at this time of day to grasp the brown musket, nothing less than a monument erected to my fame, amongst the other heroes in Westminster-Abbey, would satisfy my ambition. He who can regulate his own actions may well discipline an army; but he who can gain a conquest over his own passions need not fear an host of armed men.

Were you to see Lady Mortington, in all her improved charms, with every dazzling ornament which can set them off to advantage; were you to feel the tender sentiments I once experienced for that fair emblem of inconstancy, you would not wonder at the intoxication with which I sound my prowess.

Had

Had her ingratitude left me quite so much the master of my own inclinations, as I vainly boasted, I should have had little merit in treating her with that distant respect, her character as a married woman exacted. I deceived myself when I said I could see Alicia with indifference; the first time chance threw her in my way, the deception dropped; but where it dropped, honour stepped in, and propped my sinking fortitude. I now lay the whole weight of my feelings securely on its unbending strength; and it has since supported me in various rencounters with my too lovely enemy.

At court, at my mother's, at Lady G——'s assembly, I have since met the blooming Countess, I have seen her once in her own house; but  
not

not a word, a look, has escaped me, which, in the cooler moments of reflection, I could wish unsaid, unlooked. Whatever conflict my affections sustain, my actions shall not reproach me.—I often wonder, that, after the incontestable proof of insensibility she gave me, on our return from a certain expedition, which was to have ended in a union the most lasting, the most tender,—I more than wonder, I am astonished, how my reason could be so much blinded by passion, as not to discover that I was only the dupe of my own partiality. Faith! I can give you no account of the beginning or end of an attachment so ridiculous. I only suppose it was begun at her eyes, and hope it will subside by the force of unprejudiced judgment. Nature formed her person beautiful, to engage  
my



my admiration; Art endowed her mind with its thousand deceptions, to make me curse my folly. Lunatic-like, I drew closer the bandage of infatuation, by which my sight was obscured; I decked the soul of my Alicia with perfections which never existed in her heart; and, fool that I was, worshipped the idol of my own inventive fancy. I allow she is still beautiful as ever; that I cannot yet behold her charms without feeling their influence; but I am no longer her slave. Were she a widow to-morrow, she is the last woman in the universe who should a second time impose on my senses. No: if ever again I entertain a serious thought of matrimony, my wife must be mistress in reality of those delicacies, those refinements, the shadows of which

which I have hitherto mistaken for substance.

We are both, I believe, mighty easy about each other ; she seems already to have forgotten that I have ever been more to her than a common acquaintance ; neither conscious shame, nor agitating sensibility, affects her composure. Well, it is all for the best. I am but a man. I would not have her less insensible for the world. If we can resist such temptations as fall in our way, there is no necessity to wish for greater merely to combat with. A man may sometimes judge of his own strength ; but weaknesses often lie concealed under self-approbation, which it might be dangerous to call from their hidden recesses.—Enough of Lady Mortington ;—her husband

husband did not use me well in supplanting me, after knowing my attachment, and the difficulties by which I was surrounded; yet, I heartily forgive, nay, I can even thank him for the unintended service he has done me. Had Alicia been worthy of my heart, the refusal of his would have been grateful to my affections; his pretensions, then, could only have added to her value, consequently to my happiness; but as she never deserved the preference I gave her, my obligations to him are not less for removing my deception.

Lord Mortington's character is not so unpleasing as I have joined with many others in believing;—he has gained in his understanding, appearance, and address, by his connection,  
more

more than I lost when he obstructed mine. It has generally been allowed that love is a polisher of the roughest manners; but I should as soon have expected a diamond could have communicated its own lustre to the slave that digs it from the mine, or to the artificer who moulds it into form, as that Mortington should adopt in any degree, a propriety, an ease, an elegance, in the mode of his behaviour, so foreign from what made him the subject of your, of my, of every body's dislike and ridicule. His Countess is certainly mistress of the graces; yet the change is wonderful.—I know you are not exactly of my opinion. You never would acknowledge that my Alicia was the most beautiful of women; but, for once, do not oppose this assertion—~~pr~~thee do not;  
my

at the instigation of prudence, love, or virtue, who tell me, they are the constant inhabitants of her bosom, that they form her thoughts, govern her actions, and regulate her every motion. Her hair is auburn, uncurled, unpowdered, unfeathered, rich only in its own natural beauties ; in her dress, she only submits to decent custom ; vanity is banished from her toilet ; good sense conducts her thither ; taste, simplicity, neatness, are her three assistant graces ; and, when attired by them, humility leads her forward. She is supported on one side by fortitude, on the other by smiling innocence ;— youth, vivacity, with all their train of gentle, generous, tender passions, revel before her airy footsteps. What hands ! what arms ! what proportion ! what universal elegance ! Thus adorned, thus

thus attired, thus led, thus preceded, she comes towards me. Take care, Derwent, lest a second time, Pygmalion-like, thou fallest a victim to thy own creation.——I will not write another syllable.—Yes, I will tell you, that I go this moment to South Audlystreet, I shall, whilst warmed with the phantom I have raised, see Lady Mortington—see her with indifference, and prove the validity of my new visionary attachment. Farewell.

## LETTER XXIV.

*From the same to the same.*

Hill-street.

MY military ardour is at an end ;—farewell posthumous fame ;—I would not give a rush for monuments erected to my memory, lasting as time itself, conscious as I am of not deserving the distinction. I resign my truncheon to any other more likely than I am, to wield it with true heroism. I a General ; I discipline regiments ; I encounter a host of armed men,

men, who am not fit to carry a halbert in the corps of discretion ! No, no, my friend ; a settled life now terminates the view of my ambition ; I have not a wish, a desire, beyond it. Despise me if you can ; I have been in danger ; a miracle has saved me ; I am come off with honour ; but more, a thousand times more, in love than ever.

Full of my enchanting vision, I went, as I told you I intended, to South-Audly-street. Lord Mortington was not at home. I asked for the Countess, and was shewn to her dressing-room. I entered with a vacant, unembarrassed air. I believe I was hardly yet roused from my delicious reverie ; my mind was in strange confusion ; there are presentiments not



—West ! she is virtuous, strictly virtuous ; it was not love, but the fear of my reproaches, by which she was affected, even to tears affected. Softened, as I tell you, the only favour I could obtain from her, was a half promise, which (let me do her the justice to say) I almost tortured from her, to give me quarter of an hour's conversation at Cornelly's masquerade next Thursday.

Condemn me not harshly ; you have my thoughts undisguised as they ascend to Heaven ; it is from them only that I am condemned even in my own opinion ; for, though the force of passion hurried me to lengths discretion forbade, yet, believe me, I never insulted her ear with a declaration improper for the wife of Lord Mortington, or  
ever

ever formed a design derogatory to her, to his, or to my own honour. I own myself then charmed at her consciousness of having injured me; I thought, but I now confess it was an erroneous supposition, that, without criminality, I might indulge myself publicly or in private, with seeing and conversing with her. The false colouring with which I glossed over the inclination I found in my heart at this moment to keep up an intimacy with Lady Mortington, made me see no impropriety in my request for next Thursday; it was formed in consequence of the innocent gratification my senses received in the present interview. By all that is most dear and sacred to me, I solemnly protest, a wish more guilty than seeing and talking to her without

constraint was not formed even in my ideas. I dare not answer for my fallibility in a less delicate situation; but in this, my honour was too nearly concerned; neither can I say when my unmeaning gallantry might have ended, had not Heaven opportunely dispatched one of its fairest ministering angels of grace, peace, and love, to my rescue from folly. Just as I had thanked her for having granted my petition, the lock softly turned, softly the door opened, and in glided the — gentle guardian of my peace. Whilst this gentle guardian restored peace to my bosom, I found a vacancy there, which convinced me, however misled by former appearances, that I been the master of my own heart till that moment.

In

In the history of my attachment to Lady Mortington, let these errata be inserted; for passion, read deliberate admiration; for transports, read the endearing intercourse of friendship formed in infancy.——I am mad, absolutely distracted; I have found my imaginary angel-woman——call her what you will now; but if you should ever have the honour to approach her it must be by the title of Derwent; or you will see me the most miserable of men. Is it impossible that this was not our first meeting? Was it possible that we knew each other before our parents ushered us into this world of confusion? or why did my soul fly to meet her with all the eagerness, friendship, ardour, of a long-established connection? Why does it now inform me, that my passion for her will end

only with my existence? I know nothing of who or what she is, except from sympathy, which tells me she is every thing in the world to me, and that without her the world would be a desert. If ever in my life I have done a good action, Providence now means to reward me with the brightest gem in its treasury. She must, she shall be mine. I would not lose the dear, delightful hope, of calling her my own. I would not lose it for millions. Wish you a representation of her person,—look for it in the picture I faintly sketched in my preceding letter. Nothing is beautiful, or the reverse, but by comparison. I once thought my colouring, too high for the moderate pencil of nature;—my judgment was that of a novice; I was not well enough acquainted with the works of

that great artist, to know how infinitely she can excel the utmost sketch of human invention. The liveliest efforts of my imagination faded in presence of the wonder she this day produced, to convince me of her superiority. Every look I presumed to steal on her masterly production filled me with conviction; I looked—I trembled—I was confounded at my own presumption. What I had drawn of perfection was only a copy, a poor, faint copy; but in point of description, the likeness was so striking, that when the lovely original flashed upon me, I should have regarded her appearance as the continuance of my transporting vision, had not the advantage on the side of reality been so very conspicuous, that I could not avoid seeing myself an humble imitator, without a view to imitation.

I never before saw that woman, though I honour the sex in general, who could furnish materials of mind and person, to set me at work on that business; my fancy supplied the deficiency; I modelled a female; I called it perfect, and became enamoured of my own performance. When I saw Olivia, which was the only name by which Lady Mortington distinguished this phenomenon, I staggered with surprise, and at one view confessed myself a dunder. More virtues, more graces, than fiction had taught me to place around my ideal Divinity, crowded the eyes, and attended the sober, modest step of my soul's conqueror; their presence was no visible, that speech or action were of no importance in revealing them. After the experience I have paid for, I think I should be delicately cautious  
in

in the choice of a wife, yet could I with propriety have offered my hand this morning to Olivia; without a single question of who, or what she was, without waiting to discover other excellencies than what her appearance ascertained, I would have led her to the altar. Thither I will yet lead her, if her heart is not impenetrable to the warmest, tenderest assiduities, that charms like her's ever inspired. Now, would I give half my fortune to be insured success. What a fatiguing road of doubts, perplexities, suspense, have I to travel through, before I drink at the stream of certainty! If dear Hope refreshes me on my journey, I shall go on well enough; but unless I keep her constantly in my eye I inevitably faint beneath the burden I carry; what can gail a man of sensibility equal to a load of  
of



of unrequited affection, of which he cannot divest himself? My affections are fixed as fate; I am doomed to love her whether she be kind or cruel. I thought, (but it may be only fancy; we often imagine we foresee events, which, were they really to happen, would most afflict us,) I thought my angel, as she passed her victim, glanced her eye over him, her eye beaming the mild lightning of virtue, but on me it seemed directed with a look of anger bordering on contempt. No, no; don't regard a word I say; I am too much her's to be myself; I don't know what I say; rather believe me an ingenious self-tormentor, than that I excited scorn in a heart where nothing less than ruling with absolute power will keep me from a state of desperation. I was misled; my mind was not in a situation

situation to stand her pure examination, when I thought she looked displeased. I saw her not with my own, but with the eyes of my conscience, which was a little incumbered at that moment, by my having introduced a subject to Lady Mortington, which, of all others, I ought to have avoided, and which her presence interrupted. What needless trouble have I given myself; she could not be offended with me; she could not see into my former thoughts; and had she penetrated into those I now entertained, she would have found nothing there but her own sweet image; surely that could not have created disgust; I am quite easy; I have misconstrued the expression of her animated countenance to my own disadvantage—Why should she hate me? I will oblige her to return my passion;

passion; her soul is not the seat of indifference; I will oblige her to return it, or expire at her feet. Forbid it fate, that a second Mortington should cross my purpose. I keep my appointment religiously on Thursday; I keep it from other motives than those on which it was first founded; I have a thousand things to say to Lady Mortington; I will try to make her my friend; her friendship may greatly assist my design. Had you seen my Olivia,—she must, she shall be my Olivia;—had you heard the music of her voice; in short, had you my feelings, you would not wonder that I should lose half my senses,—you would only be surprized that I retain the least spark of reason. Captivating creature! Where has she been concealed, that I should never have seen, never have heard of her before?

fore? The innocence, the simplicity, the modesty, that accompanies all she says, all she does, would lead you to believe, she had been her whole life sheltered in retirement from the baneful blast of a corrupt, vicious, dissipated world. Again, her knowledge in all which that world produces of good, great, or amiable, forbids the supposition; delicacy of sentiment, grace of diction, persuasive eloquence, are all her own. — You will ask, perhaps, how in one short hour I could discover so many perfections? You are no lover, or you will spare me the question; she spoke but little; that little charmed, it more than charmed, it transported me; I saw, I felt the rest. I am going to close my letter, throw myself into an easy chair, fold my arms, and devote my whole soul to the contemplation of love and my Olivia.

## LETTER XXV.

*Olivia to Mrs. Selwin.*

South Audley-Street

**P**REPARE yourself, my dearest Madam, for intelligence full of events. Be not alarmed; strange, very strange things have happened, delightful as unexpected. Your amiable daughter, and my most amiable friend, is no longer unacquainted with the honour you have conferred on your ever grateful Olivia. Your letters, of which she is the subject, have cost her a thousand tears; it is by her command I am now going

going to relate to you circumstantially all that has happened. You are the best, you will now be also the happiest of mothers. Lady Mortington bids me speak of scenes which I should otherwise have passed over. If in obedience to her Ladyship's injunctions, I am obliged to give you a moment's pain, let it not afflict my revered Mrs. Selwin; but consider it as a prelude to the full accomplishment of all your most ardent wishes. However appearances may at first encrease your maternal apprehensions, dwell not, I beseech you, on appearances; proceed to the discovery of those treasures in the Countess's heart, which will abundantly repay all your former anxieties. — Since my best, my beloved, my paternal friend, has been recalled to Heaven, since he has left the child of his bounty

bounty to struggle with misfortunes, my soul has been a stranger to joy—my happiness fled with him; but on this occasion, I feel the returning influence both of joy and happiness. Oh, Madam! how am I transported, to communicate tidings that will convey to your mind that calm tranquillity which the poison of suspicion has too long banished from thence. Whilst I am indulging my own emotions of gratitude, I forget that I am too sporting with your suspense, by withholding the very felicity I most impatiently long to impart. I see my error, and intreat your forgiveness. Within the last three weeks, I have observed an unusual air of thoughtfulness overspread the features of Lady Mortington; she appeared less disposed for company, came often to my apartment,

ment, or sent for me to her own, where we have read together hours without interruption. She honoured me with directing the choice of our studies, listened with attention; and such passages as delight the judgment, or touch the passions, visibly affected her. I thought of you, my dear Mrs. Selwin; I was charmed at an alteration so flattering to your hopes.

Sometimes Lord Mortington was admitted to our party, without any repugnance on the part of his Countess; on the contrary, I saw that she behaved to him with increasing regard. He beheld the change in his favour with rapture, and omitted nothing to convince her, how very dear she was to his affections. The mode of her present amusements transported him; but  
he



he did not express his pleasure by words; it was shewn by the most flattering assiduities; he redoubled his attention to improve her taste for rational entertainments, and to make those flowers, which began to spring up in her mind, take root there, and blow habitually. What surprized me more than any other part of her conduct was, that, for several days, she ordered herself to be denied; and, when the servant asked if her Ladyship included Lady Alice Sinclear, her reply was, I make no exceptions. This sudden revolution I was puzzled to account for. Why, Madam, should I conceal my thoughts from you? I have already disclosed them to the Countess, and she hears them without displeasure. Well, then, dear Mrs. Selwin, I will tell you, that this coolness between  
such

such intimate friends did not lull my apprehensions; they acquired new strength from a circumstance so very extraordinary. I saw Lady Alice's dismissal in a light disadvantageous to both; the prudence of neither was raised in my opinion; you know my sentiments of Lady Alice Sinclear, you know also the reasons you had given me to suppose Lady Mortington improperly attached. Lord Derwent is frequently with both the ladies. There is no necessity for a further explanation; it accounts for my surmises. Last Tuesday as we were sitting quite alone, a loud knocking at the door occasioned Lady Mortington to exclaim, Olivia, was ever any thing so unlucky? here is company coming, and I have forgot to be denied; stay and receive them with me, and we will return to Sir Roger

Roger de Coverly and his widow, the moment we are at liberty.——I closed the book, begged her Ladyship would excuse my absence till her visitors had left her, and, with some difficulty, obtained her permission. I was going towards my own apartment, when the sound of feet on the stairs made me turn back to a small library, which, by a glass door, communicates with her Ladyship's dressing-room. I entered from the anti-chamber; and, directed merely by chance; the green silk curtain being only half drawn, I could not avoid seeing and hearing all that passed within. I had taken down a book, from which my attention would not have wandered, but for the name of Lord Derwent, pronounced by your daughter, in an accent that alarmed me. I turned my eye to that  
part

part of the door unconcealed by the curtain. For the first time I saw Lord Derwent, he had taken the Countess's hand;—my heart beat double;—she was disconcerted;—it was her embarrassed looks that distressed me. The graces of this young nobleman's person were too conspicuous to leave me quite easy for the consequences of a private interview; past circumstances, your apprehensions, all rushed upon my mind, and left me no time to deliberate.—The conversation grew interesting; I trembled for her peace and the peace of both families. Again, I was less disordered by observing that he preserved an air of perfect respect, and appeared very sensible of the great impropriety he had committed; whilst she, after a moment's recollection, lost all her embarrassment, recovered her

former composure, and supported in all respects the delicacy of a married character; but, from the first, I did not deliberate; I determined to interrupt the tête-a-tête. This, Madam, this interview with Lord Derwent, is the incident I wished to keep from your knowledge; but, as matters have since turned out, I obey the Countess with less reluctance, when she commands me not to withhold it;—she says, if I do not relate every thing, it shall all come with aggravated severity from her own pen; never, never more, added she, will I be guilty of concealment to the best of parents. Lord Derwent's visit ended about an hour after I joined them; and I saw with satisfaction, that my presence was not unwelcome to either. His Lordship had taken leave but a few minutes, when a sealed

• note

note was delivered to Lady Mortington. Once more I harboured an idea injurious to her prudence;—I could think of nothing but Lord Derwent;—I watched her countenance;—her eyes carelessly glanced over the suspected billet;—in her eyes I read my mistake;—I paid the forfeit of a blush, and my suspicions vanished for ever. Having read the note, she put it into my hand, with a smile of gracious sweetness, Peruse, said she, this curious scrap, my dear Olivia, and see what a loss I have sustained; yet you owe the writer some acknowledgments; her treachery has taught me to be more sensible than I otherwise might have been of your valuable friendship. She gave me no time to reply, but left the room.—I was oppressed by a condescension, a tenderness so unexpected, and from

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that

that instant felt for her the affection of a sister.——Has not Providence blessed me, by assigning us one common mother? I have, all my life, experienced, that the ties of benevolence are not inferior to those of blood.——Whilst Lady Mortington thought fit to keep me at that humble distance fortune had placed between us, I loved her only for the sake of my dear, dear Mrs. Selwin; she is now entitled to my love in a double degree. Oh! Madam, she is very, very amiable; nature has not been in fault; whenever her Ladyship has erred, prejudice of education must have occasioned her error; the innate principle of virtue has never deserted her bosom; it has remained steady and unshaken against the force of example, the attacks of fashion, the hurricane of dissipation. Again, I am transgressing

transgressing on your patience; you have yet much to be informed of. I return to the billet left with me by Lady Mortington, which I here transcribe.

## B I L L E T.

“ I have done myself the honour to leave my name so often at your Ladyship's door, that I am really quite tired with dancing after you ;—I go out of town, to avoid the horrid mortification of meeting a person I once called my friend, but now find her soul is incapable of friendship. I have long observed your coolness, Madam, even before you thought proper to affront me openly. Some busy intermeddler, I suppose, has stuffed your head with nonsense;—you have very low connections,



tions, I always told you so; but you would not listen to my advice. I hate dependants that aspire to any title beyond a servant; nothing but mischief comes of admitting such creatures into one's family. Should you make a proper regulation in your domestic arrangement, in consequence of the hint I have given you, I am so steady, even to a degree of folly, in my friendship, that I cannot bid your Ladyship adieu in absolute anger. Dismiss your toad-eater, be convinced of the cruel injustice of your behaviour, and how impossible it is to find a friend so sincere as myself; then a letter will reach me at Lady Hassard's, and place you in the same warm corner of my heart which you once delighted to occupy.

“ALICE SINCLER.”

I took

I took infinitely more notice of the formation of every letter in Lady Alice's note, than of the matter it contained. I drew from my pocket-book the blackest scrole that ever was produced by envy, art, or malevolence, and eagerly made a comparison. I was not wrong in my conjectures; the note to Lady Mortington, and the anonymous caution levelled against her reputation, against your repose, against the honour of both families, were dictated by the same head, proceeded from the same heart, and were written by the same hand; the likeness broke through all disguise; it broke so strongly, that ignorance itself could not have mistaken it. I had but just finished the examination, when Lady Mortington returned. The anonymous letter I concealed; and giving her back Lady

Alice's billet, with a smile, I said, notwithstanding the severity with which I have been treated, I can heartily forgive her Ladyship, both from disinclination to resentment, and because the injury she intended procures me the advantage of Lady Mortington's friendship.——Then you think, Olivia, that she glanced at you in her illiberal reflections.——It is impossible, Madam, to mistake the meaning of Lady Alice, she expresses herself too forcibly to have it misapprehended.——Well, you are a good soul, Olivia; if my esteem and friendship will be grateful to you, from this moment know yourself mistress of both. I have always loved you. The enemy who prevented me from giving you earlier proofs of my regard has lost her power; my own heart too is beginning to experience other sentiments.

ments from those it has hitherto entertained; it has been faulty, very faulty. A tear strayed down her cheek, and she sighed deeply. How affectingly interesting, Madam, was your charming daughter at this moment,—how bright was the dawning of those virtues which have every hour since been rising to meridian splendor! I did not try to hide the transports she excited; your idea was so connected with them, that by the inspiration of sympathy, you alone can judge of their excess. Truth carries conviction in the most trifling word, look, or action; Lady Mortington saw my emotions proceeded from sincerity; and, however indifferently expressed, received them with the most distinguishing marks of favour. She folded me in her arms with the cordial embrace of tenderness, and from this blessed in-

stant reserve was banished our society. Now is her whole soul opened to my view; and you will see it, as I did, freed from disguise;—if there was more shade than light in the picture she held up, how great are the allowances for the generous conviction with which she marks the former, the sweet modesty with which she conceals the latter; but how much greater are due on the score of her falling into improper hands, who, by attempting to polish nature, like an unskilful painter undertaking to mend a fine piece, obscures or defaces those delicate strokes which he has not taste to admire, scarcely understanding to distinguish. I have been, said the charming Countess, since my earliest remembrance, blinded by custom, misled by appearances, and the dupe of fashion.

Lady

Lady Derwent took me from the protection of my parents, before their precepts had made the least impression on my infant mind. I never enquired minutely into their motives for parting with me; but suppose it was owing to the remarkable intimacy which I have heard subsisted between her family and that of my father's. She was a ward of my grandfather's, and brought up with my father from childhood.—Well, Olivia, under the auspices of this friend, the first lesson in which I was instructed taught me to think of my father and mother as people of an inferior station to that which her Ladyship's fond partiality had raised their daughter. My mother was particularly regarded by her as a mere plebeian, whilst her early knowledge of my father, and the obligations she

owed my grandfather, gained him rather more distinction; he was mentioned as a man of fashion, who had forfeited his pretensions to gentility, by marrying beneath himself.

It pains me, dearest Madam, to employ my pen on a subject like this; yet in justice to Lady Mortington, I dare not suppress the disagreeable circumstance, as it leads you the more easily to account for the adulteration of her innocent mind. By these repetitions you will clearly distinguish the arts which estranged her affections. Your judgment will tell you how impossible it was for the seeds of filial duty, or, indeed, of any other virtue, to spring up in a soil and aspect so contrary to their nature.

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A false odium can never hurt the person at whom it is levelled;—the rank your father held—the fortune, the still more than fortune, the conspicuous merit, which, in giving you, he bestowed on Mr. Selwin, quiets my fears of offending, though all these considerations have not conquered my reluctance to repeat what the folly and vanity of another presumptuously suggested.——My infancy, continued Lady Mortington, was passed in training me to make no despicable figure in the *beau monde*. All my studies, all my employments, were directed to that great end. Nothing was essential, nothing necessary, but what tended to the embellishing my person, or giving ease and grace to my manners. My natural genius leaned to satire; I lisped its language before I almost undertood  
any



—Whenever my banishment was but hinted, I doubled my diligence to get my sentence reversed; and when it was judged proper for me to pay my parents a visit of ceremony, nothing but her Ladyship's appointing the very day on which her woman should come to fetch me back, would have made me patiently submit to what I then thought the heaviest of all misfortunes.

I hope, Olivia, I am not ill-disposed by nature; for, on these occasions, during the times I was at Selwin Cottage, my heart was sensible to the laudable indulgences I there experienced.—

Alas! whatever duty, whatever affection for my father and mother, whatever love for my sister, I used to carry with me to town, all was forgot before the

the season came round again for repeating my visit ; when I had always the same invincible aversion to conquer. Had half the pains been taken to improve my feelings, that were used to destroy them, I should not have laid up such a fund for regret as nothing will ever lessen, except I can convince my own family of a reformation in my sentiments, which, though perfectly sincere, is commenced at so late a date as can afford me but a distant prospect of being restored to their tenderness.—I was here going to interrupt her. It was difficult to confine the joy I felt ;—my silence became a burthen ; but she would not permit me to break it.—Stop, dear Olivia, said she ; you do not yet know how very ungrateful, how very undeserving I have been. Withhold the flattering comfort till  
you

you know me more thoroughly. If, after I have gone through the whole process of self-accusation, you can give me any consolation, it will be a cordial to support me in the perseverance of all my present good resolutions. I intreated her Ladyship to proceed, for that her happiness was now so dear to me, I suffered from my impatience to acquaint her with many circumstances which would convince her, she might build its foundation on as much certainty as depended on the fondest affection of her family to secure. My eyelids grow heavy; they remind me how rapidly the night has flown away. I am fascinated to my subject; but the weaknesses of nature are not to be resisted.

CONTINUATION

## CONTINUATION.

Two hours sleep brings me refreshed to join the thread of my narrative ; and now, Madam, you will attend to Lady Mortington.——Before I was fourteen, a visiting day was fixed, on which I received my company in as much form and with as much ceremony as if I had been the established mistress of a family. My acquaintance were chosen from amongst the young nobility of my own age ; but Lady Alice Sinclear was the friend of my heart, selected in preference to many who courted my confidence. To Lady Alice, it gave up all the trifling, unimportant concerns which girls are apt to imagine prodigious consequential, and in return she appeared equally communicative. Long before we had secrets

secrets of our own, those of our families served to cement our imaginary friendship : Whatever came to our knowledge by observation was retailed to each other, heightened by all our fertile fancies could invent, to give the most common events an air of mystery.—A freedom so unreserved grew up between us, that it would have been high treason to have concealed the most trivial of our thoughts. Lady Alice was an only child, and the darling of her parents, who left her sole mistress of herself and fortune, at the age of eighteen ; but this made no change in the steadiness of our romantic attachment. Vanity was the first passion with which I became acquainted ; and every action of my life has, in a great measure, been governed by its influence. The companions.

nions with which I associated being all ladies of title, I could hardly pardon my father because he was not an Earl, to give me the same advantage ; I have felt my face glow with vexation at being called Miss Selwin ; the very sound of Miss grated on my ear ; and, to avoid so odious an appellation, I requested my young friends, (confessing to them the formality of Miss Selwin hurt me prodigiously) to call me Alicia. I now see how much I degraded, instead of exalting myself, by this ridiculous pride ; for, though they granted my request, I am sure they laughed at me for making it. This point gained—no longer Miss Selwin, but Alicia ; I industriously copied their mode, manners, and expressions ; I was an adept in the science of fashion ; I grew more satisfied, and  
was

was ennobled, at least in my own opinion.

I was sixteen when Lord Bromsgrove returned from finishing his studies at Geneva: He was looked upon as the most accomplished young man of the age. You may have observed that his person is not unobscure. She sighed—I blushed scarlet deep—Why did I blush? I have done with my fears on the account of Lady Mortington. Oh, Madam! do not ask an explanation; what has since happened opens my eyes, and covers me with confusion!—I must guard my mind from the approach of romantic hopes too sanguine for admittance. I will try to forget my present feelings, and bring you back to Lady Mortington. —She saw me blush, she saw me agitated,

agitated, and said smiling, I read your thoughts, my kind Olivia ; but, when you have heard me out, you will be satisfied the sigh which escaped me, and cost you a blush, did not proceed from any remaining partiality that I entertain for Lord Derwent ; and yet I will own to you, it was himself who occasioned it, or rather the reflection of my own ingratitude ;—I have used him sadly ; but if he would give me leave to direct his choice, I think, Olivia, I could find out a method to make him ample amends for my ill treatment.

You can be no stranger, continued she, to the flighty step I took previous to my marriage ;—that step, Olivia, was not the consequence of violent love—no, my dear, I never have, nor ever desire;



desire, to experience that troublesome passion to excess. I preferred Lord Derwent to all men, at the time he prevailed on me to go with him where our union might be completed, without meeting those obstructions which our design would most certainly have encountered at home. When I tell you I preferred him to all men, I have told you the most I ever felt in his favour; the prospect of a coronet thrown into the same scale, with this negative preference, made me not only deceive him, but even myself, with the appearance of a warmth, which, in reality, I was incapable of feeling. After being overtaken on our secret expedition, and brought back to St. James's Square, I was received in so cruel a manner by his mother,—I was sent from the family under such a cloud of disgrace,

grace,—that when Lord Mortington renewed his addresses; which I had often refused with contempt, why, in a fit of anger and revenge, I thought I could do no better than accept his proposals. My condescension made him happy—he never once upbraided me with Derwent, but carried me quietly down to Mortington Castle. It was then that my dear excellent mother gave you to my friendship; she could not have bestowed you on me at a more unlucky season; for at that time, I was alive to no one sensation but vanity. I could not refuse you, but was insensible to the value of her present; I thought of nothing but making you useful in the management of my family, concluding, that your spirit must be humble as your apparent condition, but am happily disappoint-

ed.—Will you, Olivia, forgive my frankness? Will you not love me less for the declaration I am going to make;—I see by that affectionate smile you will not. Well then, I will venture to tell you, that I hated my kind Olivia, from no other reason than that she forced me to esteem her—forced me against my inclinations—against my determined resolutions to the contrary. You was long the subject of my letters to Lady Alice Sinclear, who strengthened my resolves of keeping you at the distance of a mean dependant, placed by my mother to be her informer and the spy of my actions. I soon discovered how much I had mistaken your character, but was too proud to own my error.—Long before I left the castle, you gained ground considerably in my good opinion; but  
vanity,

vanity, and its agent Lady Alice, still obliged me to persevere in my former indifference.

Now tell me, my dear, can you generously forgive the almost unpardonable injustice I have done you? Can you condescend to accept the steady friendship I now offer you, with this assurance, that it ends only with my life. I shall not, Madam, interrupt this interesting period with my reply, I shall only tell you I kissed her hand with fervent gratitude, and that she proceeded.—The unexpected situation in which I found myself three months after my marriage disconcerted me beyond measure; you know the difficulty I had to prevail on my Lord to bring me to town; but you do not know that I was obliged to have recourse to arts,

in order to accomplish my ends. I then submitted to them without reluctance; I now reflect on them with abhorrence. However, I was not deceived in their effects; and I wrote Lady Alice [Sinclear of my success.—I am no stranger, Madam, said I, to the trust you reposed in her Ladyship; and I know too, how greatly she has abused your confidence. She started, looked surprised, and begged I would explain my meaning: but at last yielded to my impatience, on a promise of satisfying her enquiries as soon as she had finished the subject she was then upon.—On the death of Lord Derwent, pursued she, Lady Alice wrote me, under the guise of friendship, a most insulting letter; nor did my answer want spirit, whilst I made use of the same mask which she had obligingly sent me

as

as a pattern. On my arrival in town, our former intimacy revived; but not a day passed in which I did not make some new discovery of a false, flattering, selfish, disposition. I compared it with that of my Olivia, and the comparison was horridly to Lady Alice's disadvantage. As she lost her footing in my esteem, you was raised to it. You can form no idea of what I have suffered from her insolence—from her insulting cruelty.

The first time I met Lord Derwent (since my connection with Lord Mortington) I could have seen him without pain; but she used me shockingly; she exulted; she directed her exultations to me with an intention to make me ridiculous in the eyes of some hundred spectators. My pride would not per-

mit me to quarrel with her on this account; and without a quarrel, there was no method of shaking her from my side. Wherever we afterwards happened to meet Lord Derwent, she played over the same card, and let slip no opportunity of endeavouring to torment me.—You may possibly have observed, that I have lately lived entirely at home, denied to all company. The truths are these: Your society was become valuable to me; and I would rather shut myself up for ever, than that my doors should be again opened to my greatest enemy. Hear and judge if I have given Lady Alice Sinclair an epithet too severe. I went one morning to her house; she was gone abroad; I wanted to disengage myself from going with her that evening to Soho, and went to her dressing-room.

aper

Paper and ink were laying on the table; I sat down to scratch out an apology, when a letter, unfinished, caught my eye; the words, that fool Lady Mortington, made me, without thinking it any breach of honour, satisfy my curiosity; and the doubts I had long entertained of her treachery were by this accident confirmed. The shocking epistle was intended for Lady Hassard, a woman of a very exceptionable character; and by these wretches, I found myself treated in the most barbarous manner. I flew from the house in an agony not to be described; but I had put myself too much in her power to resent publickly the baseness of her perfidy; and was forced silently to drop her acquaintance, without assigning any reason to her or to the world. As soon as I had reached my own apartment,



ment, I shut myself up in it for three hours, in which time I took an impartial review of my actions, from the first moment I could remember down to the present period. The retrospect was painful and tedious. I enquired of my heart, why it was painful, why tedious.—It informed me, the difficulties of which I complained proceeded from the ingratitude, from the unfeelingness, of my own disposition, which had not allowed one act of duty, love, or benevolence, to mark my conduct, and lighten the heavy catalogue of vanity, indiscretion, affectation, and deceit. One of my principal motives for accepting Lord Mortington, was, to revenge myself on Lady Derwent, by outrying her in taste, shew, magnificence; to take place of her; to retort on her, whenever occasion presented itself,

itself, the mortification, the bitter chagrin, she heaped on me without mercy. I knew this revenge was to be accomplished by my having a more splendid equipage, finer jewels, and an older title than her own, or by any other trifles.—Yes, Olivia, I call them trifles; I have now had them long enough in my possession, to estimate them according to their true value; and am convinced there is as much satiety in grandeur as attends our palate, or any other changeable inclination.—You may remember, Olivia, the day I was presented, I loaded my person with every ornament fine or becoming. I did not take all this pains to make a dazzling appearance at court, but for the superior gratification of paying my first visit to Lady Derwent. I practised a thousand airs, which I proposed to

rehearse in her presence, till she was fully sensible of my importance, and of her own inferiority. I examined my dress and figure from top to toe, in my way to her Ladyship's apartment;—approbation followed my partial glance, at every mirror I passed by, and I flashed upon her in all the lightning of my borrowed glory. She took me in her arms; I saw her in the sable livery of affliction, thoughts of former kindnesses, reverted instantly to my imagination, and my visit ended totally different from what I had intended. Out of all the many schemes for which I became a wife, I have now, Olivia, nothing left to engage my attention; in some I have been disappointed, of others I am tired; so I think, my dear, I seriously think, to set about performing such articles as, in my former plan,

plan, was not even suggested. As employments of the mind are new to me, they will afford variety, and, I am apt to believe, a great deal of comfort.

—My parents, if they will condescend to overlook what has been faulty in my past conduct, shall now find a daughter diligently exact in her duty

—Lady Nelson an affectionate sister—and my Olivia too shall have her share in the distribution of my heart;—as to my little invisible, whose annunciation I received so ungraciously, it shall not want a mother, who will connect her own happiness with that of her infant.

—And now, for my very good Lord, though last, not least—what shall I say of him?—His generous bearing and forbearing leaves me much his debtor;

—I cannot repay him with that kind of fondness which nature forgot to mix

in my composition;—honour, fidelity, and esteem, (if these will content him) I shall appoint the substitutes of a more lively, yet less durable passion.— But, continued she, that I might be able to fulfil this last resolution, I require your assistance; and, as a prelude to which, it is absolutely necessary that I should inform you of what passed this morning, between Lord Derwent and myself. As the delightful subject will admit of an interruption at this place, permit me to snatch the precious moment to congratulate the dear, deserving parents of this most amiable, most excellent woman, to tell them that, were all the riches of the earth poured into my lap, it could not communicate one sensation of joy like what I feel at seeing happiness restored to the families of Selwin and Mortington.

ton. The Countess comes herself to fetch me down: She says she has company; she will not be refused.

## CONTINUATION.

Oh, Madam! to whom did the Countess call me down?—it was to Lord Derwent! I have much to tell you of your highly-honoured Olivia; you shall have it all in my next; at present it would be presumption to call off your attention from a subject so much more material to your repose.

I return to my conversation with the Countess, in her dressing-room.

You know, Olivia, continued she, how accidentally Lord Derwent dropped in, owing to my neglect in not giving

giving the orders I intended, and which had been given many preceding mornings, to admit no company. I was not prepared for his visit. A consciousness of self-blame made me, for the first time, feel his presence;—it was weak, it was simple; but I could not help it. Now, I fear, Olivia, he may possibly mistake the emotions, which, in my present disposition, arose from the conviction of conscience for the result of remaining tenderness to him, nor is this all I have to fear. Satisfied of his honour, I did not see I was doing wrong when I indulged him in a sort of conversation, which, on mature deliberation, I have not approved; but this is not all neither. He asked me, he pressed me, to give him leave to join me at Soho next Thursday; it was the first request he has ever made

made me since, by my unprecedented ingratitude, I forfeited all pretensions to his friendship. It was in my power now to oblige him—to oblige him, by granting a favour, which, I thought, exceedingly trifling, and as innocent as it was unimportant.——My steady refusal for a long time, raised the value of my compliance, and I actually admired my own finesse in giving to a mere unmeaning civility, the air of a real obligation.

When I left you reading Lady Alice's billet, I went to my own room; the domino I was to wear on Thursday hung on a chair; it brought to my recollection the promise I had made Lord Derwent, and at that moment I was forcibly struck with the impropriety, not to say the imprudence, of my engagement.



ment. What shall I do? Olivia. You must help me out of this entanglement. I would not have my fidelity to Lord Mortington suspected. Derwent has been my acknowledged lover; to be seen talking with him tête-a-tête, and at a masquerade too!—I am hurt to death by the bare idea;—it must be avoided;—what otherwise will be the opinion even of Lord Derwent himself? The very finesse I used will turn to my disadvantage. Is it reasonable to suppose I should have made such a mighty fuss in complying with his request, if I had not entertained improper thoughts of its consequences. A woman who doubts her own strength should take care not to entrust the man she suspects of design with the secret of her weakness. My case is not in the least a similar one; yet it will have the appearance

appearance of being exactly the same. I would not offend by breaking my appointment—you must keep it for me, Olivia—you must meet and undeceive Lord Derwent.—I keep it for you, Madam!—I meet Lord Derwent!—Your Ladyship is jesting, surely—and I trembled from head to foot.—Indeed, my dear, I am not jesting—I was never more serious—do not be alarmed for damages: I promise to be responsible—the benefits shall be all your own—I am undone if you do not accept my agency.—Indeed, indeed, Lady Mortington, I cannot; how can I accept it?—Pish! with all the ease in the world: but hear what I have further to say, and if you are not convinced how important, how very important your friendly offices will be to me in my perplexing dilemma; if you do

do not think you can undertake to perform them with honour, and with all personal security, I will pay your judgment that compliment you refuse to mine. I shall first recommend to your consideration, how seriously my reputation is concerned in divesting Lord Derwent's mind of impressions which he might presume to entertain, after the very silly condescensions I have this morning innocently made him. By me, Olivia, this mistake of mine cannot be removed; there is indelicacy in the very idea of beginning a conversation with him on the subject; but if you are not proof against my warmest entreaties, all may yet be settled easily enough, and very much to the credit of your friend. What I have to request is this: I shall make my apologies to Lord Mortington, for not going

ing to the masquerade; they will readily be admitted; for you know he is always in the fidgets, when my condition and the fatigues of dissipation are jumbled in the same idea. I shall desire he will attend you thither, and you must make no material objection. You are the greatest favourite he has in the world; he may be surprized at this proposal coming from me, but he will certainly be delighted at the office I assign him. Our height, air, and voice, are not so unlike, but, with a mask, we might be taken for each other;—it is what I wish particularly, that Derwent may fall into the deception. When you enter the rooms, take hold of your conductor's arm; it will carry on my scheme the better; but, above all, remember, when Lord Derwent seeks to entertain you, do not shun his advances

ces. He will, I make no doubt, take you for me;—you shall wear the dress I should have worn. I hope he does not hold me so very cheap as to suppose I would consent to meet him on terms disadvantageous to my character; but if my imprudence has given him room to form a thought so degrading, it is you who must undeceive him—you must be the guardian of my honour; to your protection I resign it; defend it as you would your own; say every thing for me that I ought to say, were I there in reality. Fear not a discovery. As I shall manage this affair, a discovery is not to be apprehended; I will take such measures with Lord Mortington, who is always ready to humour my whimsical flights, that, without letting him into my design, he shall be an accomplice in its completion.

pletion: I shall tell him it is my desire you might pass the whole evening, for his wife, to all my numerous acquaintance, that I might have the pleasure of laughing at their expence, whenever I think proper to undeceive them. He has, himself, often mistaken our voices; and when I am supposed to be actually amongst the croud, I can hardly think it possible that Derwent should detect the counterfeit;—my habit is a man's domino, and the difference with regard to our size under such a dress will not be visible.—Dearest Olivia, (and she took my hand) can you reject my petition? Does your innocence start at a proposition so consistent with its own purity? Can it be directed to a better purpose than in preserving my reputation from the blight of aspersion, and establishing my repose?

repose?—But stop, I have not yet given you all my reasons, you shall know them all before you determine.

The agents of Lady Alice Sinclear will greedily catch at a shadow of scandal, to stick it maliciously on my fame; now, it is not unlikely your conversation with Lord Derwent, under the suppositious character you assume, will awaken all their malice; but, should it reach the ear of Lord Mortington, which, I suppose, will be the case, then shall I have the glorious satisfaction to know that, in his opinion, I must stand fully acquitted. Now, Olivia, speak, for I have done.—

There was so much refinement, so much judgment, so much discretion in her Ladyship's arguments, and she enforced them so effectually, that  
however

however averse I felt myself to engage in so adventurous an undertaking, she bore down all my scruples. Well Madam, I resolved to try the experiment—to see, to speak to Lord Derwent, at the masquerade; and, if I found him an encroacher on the freedom of an interview Lady Mortington had unthinkingly granted him, I determined also he should know the powers of her resentment; for, whilst he believed me to be the Countess, I should be able to express her sentiments, and at once put an end to his ungenerous pursuits. Lady Mortington's acknowledgments for the slight service I had it in my power to render her, pained a heart already oppressed by gratitude. To avoid her thanks, and give a turn to our subject, I asked if she had forgot the hint I had dropped some time before, regarding



garding Lady Alice Sinclear, and presented her the anonymous letter. She looked at the direction—To Mrs. Selwin!—to my mother, (with an air of astonishment) what do I see? Am I in a dream? What correspondence has Lady Alice Sinclear with my mother? How, dear Olivia, came this letter in your possession? I am in agonies of suspense. I should not have given it to your Ladyship with so little caution, replied I; but the knowledge you have some days had of Lady Alice's disposition, I imagined, would prepare you for the greatest efforts that her inventive genius was capable of producing. —Whilst I spoke, her eyes were eagerly devouring the black contents. I watched every turn in her countenance, and saw it vary as her mind was agitated by rage, grief, or contempt—  
Having

Having read it to an end, she threw it on the ground, exclaiming, Oh, my mother! my dear mother! what must have been your sufferings?—My father too, Olivia!—my feelings of remorse are insupportable; — diabolical destroyer of my happiness! Yet thou stillest thyself the friend of my mother, a friend to the honour of her family. Olivia, had she exposed me to the whole world, besides sparing me this one cruel stroke, I could I have borne it. Never, never can they forgive, never again receive their much-injured daughter, who, though innocent, yet in appearance is so very, very guilty.— I cannot bear this: Oh, Olivia!—and she burst into tears.—I said every thing to calm her sorrows; I was not sparing of the cordial which your goodness had intrusted to my care; I administered

ministered your love, your forgiveness, in large portions, and by them soon saw Lady Mortington restored in a great degree to her former composure. —She desired I would allow her to weep over those testimonies which I had received of your readiness to restore her to your maternal affections. I obeyed her commands; I delivered to her all your valuable letters; she did indeed weep over them; they were returned to me moistened with the dew of filial tenderness. I shall not enlarge on this grateful subject; your heart, Madam, will receive a fuller gratification from the letters Lady Mortington dispatches to yourself and Mr. Selwin. My mind was so exceedingly unsettled the day following those sudden revolutions, that in vain I attempted to transmit you the joyful

joyful intelligence with which my soul laboured. Thursday morning came; Thursday morning I was equally incapable; I took up the pen; a trembling seized me; my hand refused to guide it; I laid it aside. How I should best acquit myself in the important character which I was that evening to assume, occupied the whole space of my reflection; my head and heart would admit of no other idea. Every thing was conducted according to Lady Mortington's plan. I was not discovered. Lord Derwent is the most honourable, but the most dangerous of men. I dare not trust myself to write more—more might betray me from vanity to presumption;—the partition is too thin for me to venture on the experiment. Do not misunderstand me, Madam; to you I never can be guilty of concealment;

ment; but, before I venture to lay open the new emotions I have lately experienced, I must humble my heart below the attacks of ambition.—I returned from the masquerade before three in the morning. Lady Mortington was in bed, her Lord having insisted she should not stay up to expect our return; so I retired to my chamber, and wrote the first part of this packet; and I now close the whole, that it may go by this post, to convey happiness to my every dear, dear Mrs. Selwin.

LETTER

## LETTER XXV.

*Lord Derwent to Sir Philip West.*

Hill-Street.

**T**HURSDAY is over—if I am not the husband of Olivia—I will never be the husband of any other—so help me love.

My impatience carried me to Soho before eleven—no Lady Mortington—I watched the door, and examined every mask that entered—still no Lady Mortington—I took out my watch sixteen times in the first half hour—it went so much slower than my wishes, I thought

it down—I held it to my ear—it clicked faintly—I cursed the tardiness of its motion.

The situation in which I had planted myself—my eager attention directed towards the company that began to pour in with all the noise, all the violence, of rapid rivers bursting their banks—overturning every thing that impeded their torrent, but above all my frequent uneasy application to time's register—drew on me many observers. Jews, Turks, Devils, Priests, Hermits, and Courtezans, gathered round me—one slapped me on the shoulder—another tweecked me by the sleeve—a thousand squibs whizzed by my ear; but I was in no humour to return their witticisms, and they pushed me about from one to another like a tennis-ball.—A little smart gipsy

sey relieved me from this croud of impertinents, by desiring to tell my fortune : there was something in her air, which told me this was not the first time I had met her in my public walks.

Will you venture yourself with me ?

Yes, my pretty creature, to the world's end. I gave her my hand ; and we seated ourselves where we were not so liable to interruption. Well, my fair wanderer—now give me a specimen of your art, and be assured I do not suspect you of deficiency in that study.

Your reasons, sweet gentleman.

You are a woman.——

You are severe ; but I forgive your general sarcasm, as the small portion of art I possess informs me you have been a sufferer.——

Perhaps I have—she laughed—it will not permit of a perhaps—people of my profession speak with certainty.



Where did you acquire your knowledge?

From my own familiar. —

I doubt the fallibility of your familiar; the Devil is an enemy to truth.

Not a greater than yourself, worthy Sir;—if you deny that your heart has been burnt to cinder for your fickle mistress, who deceived and jilted you —Oh! it was sad, sad, sad.

Here the provoking hussy fell into a fit of pretended sobbing, from thence forgetting her disguise, she laughed loud in her own voice, and betrayed Lady Alice Sinclear; but I concealed the discovery.

Who is severe now, you young sorceress? — Come, come, since, you are so deeply skilled in the science of divination, prithee tell me the present situation of my heart?

It is worn thread-bare. — Admitted.

Why.

Why then the question?

To be informed of whom I am to recover damages for the injury it has sustained.

Your former tyrant.

Impossible!—I caution you not to rely on the information of your familiar—it deceives you.

If it has deceived me!—but I am more inclined to doubt your sincerity.

Upon my honour.

Are your affections engaged elsewhere?

You are a thief by trade; I have embezzled half of them already.

I kissed her hand:—she sighed.

You do not know me?

Not I, upon the veracity of a lover.

Or the stability of your mistress's promises.

Do you doubt my first, that you want a second security?

If I had courage to trust you.

What then ?

Why, I could direct you, sweet Sir, where to find a fair Lady, faithful, tender, and generous.

Sweet dear ; my taste does not lead that way.——How !

Why I am a lover of Nature, and am contented with her common productions.

Surely, you would not be displeased, if she should throw in your way one of her best compositions.

I hate monsters.——

Pish ! your Honour's jeering puts me quite beside myself—sixty thousand pounds, and a young agreeable heiress! —Are these monsters ?

A broad hint, Seaton !—this creature is my aversion—I could not resist the temptation I felt to punish her forwardness and mortify her vanity.——I paused.

Well,

Well, are these monsters? What a time you take up to consider—~~sixty~~ thousand pounds, your Honour!

Hold, child! I was considering that upon certain conditions, I should not be displeased to take your recommendation.

Are your conditions hard?—No.

Of what nature?

Only that the fair Lady for whom you are so much interested, shall not be a coquette; and, above all, that she shall have no female friend.

Well, well; I think by a little of my magical art, I can form her to your wishes. Tell me what sort of disposition suits your fancy.

She must be in all respects the very reverse of a certain young woman of quality, not a hundred miles from St. James's, whom I have often had the plague of meeting in the company of

my former mistress, and who has given me a surfeit of female friendships.

She arose hastily from her seat visibly agitated, and flew the field, whilst I composed returned to my station near the door, which, during the above conversation, I kept constantly in view.

It was exactly forty-seven minutes after twelve, when, amongst twenty or thirty others who rushed in together, I distinguished Lady Mortington leaning on the arm of her Lord. My heart beat high ; but I let her pass on with the croud unnoticed by me, being cautious to prevent any unjust suspicion where I knew she had so many observers ; but was more particularly afraid of the designing, revengeful gipsy. Well, then, I let her Ladyship go on without seeming to observe her keeping next the door, as if still in expectation

pectation of somebody.—The next party that entered, gave me the opportunity of joining a fine shewy female mask, to whom in appearance, I attached myself, as if, in her arrival, my enquiries had ended, and under her auspices I mingled with the multitude. The better to conceal my design, I said a thousand foolish things to my unknown, which she did not at all seem to dis-relish. I had some difficulty to get myself disentangled from a *tête-à-tête*, which grew confoundedly tedious; nor do I know when I should have been relieved, had not a fat holy father, his deportment stamped with the character of husband, called her to a private confession.—That Lady's conscience (said he, in no very cordial accent) is under my direction.—I could have hugged him for exerting his claim at this period, but retorted with an air  
of

of gallantry ; that is a point, father, I should have contested with all my prowess ; but for the dread I have of being clapped up in the inquisition, and by that means be deprived of any future occasion to pay my devoirs to your charming penitent.——The churl made no reply—I bowed low to the Lady, and marched off.—By this time I had quite lost sight of Lord and Lady Mortington, I pursued them through several rooms, and at last found them seated by each other. There was less company in this apartment than in any of the rest. I had no difficulty in making my way to them ; and taking off my mask, I paid my respects to both. The Countess received them only with a slight inclination of her head ; his Lordship followed my example ; we remarked he shook me heartily

heartily by the hand ; said he was fortunate in meeting me, and, without the least reserve, offered me a place between them. The subject started for conversation, sprung from our present entertainment — Comparisons were drawn between such as those at which we now assisted, and the masquerades in foreign countries, not much to the honour of ourselves or nation. The nonsense and absurdities we met with in such a numerous association of unsupported characters afforded us no small share of mirth.—Lady Mortington's observations were lively, spirited, and supported with a strength of judgment, delicacy of sentiment, harmony of expression, refulgency of wit, that absolutely filled me with astonishment. I listened, I gazed, I wondered—my senses were dazzled ; and, if my heart  
from



sion rather than abused the reliance on my honour. You are, said I, a very unfashionable married woman, Madam. How so, my Lord? Why I greatly question, if there is another in the room that would have made the same request you did on parting with her husband. I am sorry Lord Derwent should hold our sex so cheap; and, let me add, estimate his own so much beneath what I would willingly believe their real value. If there are so very few married couples happy, let us candidly enquire into the cause of their indifference, and I fear we shall make great discoveries to the disadvantage of human nature in general; for my own part, however unfashionable, I shall never be ashamed to confess, in defiance of custom, that the wife of Lord Mortington is not insensible to  
his.

his attentions. — His Lordship, in possessing a wife of your refined sentiments does not come in for a common share in Heaven's best distributions; nor can I envy the partiality it has shewn in his favour: he has engaged my friendship by giving me this moment of privacy with your Ladyship—a moment more precious to me than ages—a moment on which, in a great measure depends my future felicity. — I do not understand you, my Lord. Why of all others is this moment the most precious? — Lord Mortington's doors will never be shut against a man of your Lordship's established character. Whether we converse together in a drawing-room, or at a masquerade—in public or in private—can be a matter of no consequence to Lord Mortington, Lord Derwent, or myself.

—Had

—Had my intentions, dear Philip, been dishonourable, what would have become of them—what would become of me, on hearing my final sentence delivered in so determined, so spirited a manner? I revered her virtue; I more than revered its sublime susceptibility—I was enchanted by the sweet, yet austere severity with which she parried my imaginary attack on her prudence.—I took her hand in mine; its trembling convinced me she was not yet freed from apprehensions; she either drew it from me, or I dropped it mechanically; the motion of each was so sudden, it would be hard to determine; for, though conscious of no ill design, I was awed by her angelic purity, and felt myself abashed, as if I had been really guilty of harbouring the worst.—At this interesting crisis,  
just

just as I was about to explain myself ; already I had said, if ever intentionally I forfeit your good opinion, or the friendship of Lord Mortington, may Heaven forsake me when most in need of his assistance !—the last word was but half pronounced, when, curse on her impertinence ! in pops the vile inquisitive gipsey, Lady Alice Sinclear. —She made as if coming towards us ; but stopping short, begged our charity, and whined out, with a malicious emphasis,—Dear, worthy, honourable lovers, throw your farthings this way ; and I will pray that a proper reward may attend your virtuous inclinations. Saying this, she suddenly made her exit, looking back, and laughing spitefully at every step that carried her from us.

Lady

Lady Mortington asking me if I knew that mask, I was giving her a short account in what a whimsical way I had found her out to be Lady Alice, when a tall spectre-like figure approached us from the very room to which the moment before her Ladyship had retired—its tight robe was wove in a thick pattern of eyes, ears, and tongues; its mask painted with the same emblems, wings at its head, shoulders, and feet, which, with the trumpet it held to its mouth, proclaimed the ridiculous figure no bad imitation of Fame. Down it sat close at my elbow. Turning round, I sternly demanded if it could not find sufficient employ in a busy world, who had enlisted it their agent, that it intruded on the retirement of rational, thinking beings.—You mistake my character,

character, it replied, in a rough masculine voice, or else omit one of its principal merits; the entertainment I afford to my employers, my diligence must first collect; it is as much my business to observe, as repeat. Count over the figures by which I am distinguished, you will find as many eyes as tongues, as many ears as eyes; wherever there is any thing mysterious, I discover it by my unescaping faculties; and when I have seen, when I have heard, as much as lays me in a moderate fund for report, I fly away thus.—He was running off, blowing his trumpet, when starting up in a rage, I laid hold of him, and wresting it from his profane mouth, I put my hand on my sword, commanding him, in a peremptory tone, that moment to unmask. I did not wonder at the submissive

missive haste in which he obliged me, when I discovered the face of an arrant coward as any within the purlieus of St James's—no other than Lord Robert Pinkny.—I could scarce refrain from laughing, when I considered how much fire I had expended on a subject, which a flip of my finger would have laid sprawling at my feet. The poor wretch was seized with something so like the fit of an ague, that he could hardly stutter out a decent apology for his behaviour, which at last he gave me to understand was the effect of his wishing to oblige a certain Lady to whom he had the honour of being—tenderly attached. I knew the certain Lady as well as he did, yet insisted on her name. The valiant tone of his voice I had taken with the ensign of his order; but in one of his own natural squeaking

ing whispers, he quavered out Lady Alice Sinclair!—To insult his defenceless weakness I looked upon merely as unmanly as setting one of the gentler sex at defiance, in which opinion I dismissed my passive victim; saying, as I restored him his trumpet, I give you back this bauble, my Lord, under the restriction that it never sounds again in the cause of defamation. Having dispatched this insignificant, and retaken my seat by Lady Mortington, I said to her, how very unlucky I am to have lost so much by impertinent intruders, of the valuable time, chance has allotted me to solicit your interest in an affair, the nearest of any other to my immediate happiness.—Proceed, my Lord, you shall find me all attention.—Tell me then, I beseech you, dear Lady Mortington who was



that Lady I found with you last Tuesday?—She hesitated. Why do you ask?—I have reasons; your Ladyship shall know by and by; but first answer my question?—She is a foreigner—her name Olivia Mildway.—Have you known her long?—Has she been long in England?—Has she, since her coming over, been always under your protection?—Mrs. Selwin, my Lord, first condescended to receive her.—Pardon me, Lady Mortington (I felt myself nettled at the degrading manner in which she spoke of my angel) you must pardon me, Madam, the term condescended I cannot assert with my ideas of the most exalted dignity, the most finished beauty, my eyes ever beheld.—Sudden partiality has blinded you, my Lord.—Then I have no desire my sight should be restored. Is she  
not

not the friend of Lady Mortington?—  
Yes, she is the friend of Lady Mortington.—Your coldness, Madam, distracts me. The shortness of your reply does not satisfy my eager impatience for information.—I could inform you of more.—I could speak more at large; but I fear my intelligence would only add to your displeasure.—Then Olivia is engaged; she loves another, and I am miserable.—Is the conclusion you draw, my Lord, so very certain?—What else, Madam, could add to the cruelty with which you torture me; if she is disengaged, if her affections are free, with what dreadful intelligence do you threaten me?—She has not commissioned me to acquaint your Lordship with the situation of her heart.—One thing you can tell me, without consulting any heart but your

own—Will you be my friend? Will you assist me with your advice? Will you permit me to visit Olivia in your family?—You must not press me on this subject, my Lord.—Her voice evidently faltered—I will not tell you what were my conjectures.—She was rising to go from me. I took her hands in mine; they were cold as ice; and replaced her with an air more passionate than tender.—I do not lose you thus, Madam; since I am to expect nothing further from you, tell me at least all you know of Miss Mildmay; and that you may not longer sport with my feelings, assure yourself I am indifferent, obstinately indifferent, to every other woman upon earth.—You have seen her, my Lord, but once.—My whole soul was her's from the first moment; nay, even before I saw her,  
my

my mind had been industrious to form a model of which she is the original. If she refuses my hand, I did adieu to England till time has mellowed an affliction the severest I can possibly experience; nor will I ever again trust to that sex, whose cruel pleasure it has hitherto been to torment, to perplex me, and to heap disappointment on disappointment.—Indeed, indeed, Lord Derwent, I do not deserve this treatment. Olivia cannot be more flattered by your favourable opinion, than I am charmed at your generous candour.—Words, mere words, Madam; you neither love Olivia, nor have for me one single spark of friendship.—You mistake, my Lord, she is dear to me as myself; but I would not wish to establish her happiness on the destruction of your own. I am your friend, what-

ever you imagine to the contrary—your glory is from this moment dear to me. I would not see it tarnished by an alliance so much beneath your rank, so infinitely beneath your merit. I would not, believe me I would not, though the affections of Olivia were in my keeping, and though I knew, by withholding them from you, I should make her miserable the rest of her days.—I had no patience left, I was going to break out. She stopped me.—Hold, my Lord, but one moment; all that I have said may appear strange to you; give me leave to explain myself. The grateful wife of Lord Mortington, never bestows a thought on any man but her husband, superior to that of friendship; to my friendship Lord Derwent is intitled—from friendship alone proceeds my absolute repugnance to oblige him.—And do you  
call

call this kindness; do you call this friendship, Lady Mortington? I detest such kindness—I disclaim such friendship.—Call them what you please, my Lord; I can bear your reproaches; I can wait patiently for your more deliberate approbation; but the outcast of Fortune, the dependent on another's bounty, the child of charity! —Hold, Madam, you have said enough; I shall find other methods of seeing and speaking to Miss Mildmay, without your intercession: though her parents were beggars, though fortune may have pursued her to the very brink of obscurity, in my heart she shall find an asylum. I would deign to say no more; but, telling her I was ready to attend her to Lord Mortington, we walked silently on till we joined his Lordship. He was standing in

a circle formed round Lady D——, who was exhibiting her elegant figure in a minuet, which unexceptionably she dances the best of any woman in England.—Having resigned my charge, I prowled about the rooms in so churlish a mood, that I could have found in my heart to have fought every man, and railed at every woman, who was so unfortunate to address me with that freedom which is consistent with the laws, modes, and customs, of a masquerade.—In the course of my rounds, I returned to the very spot where I had left Lord and Lady Mortington, the latter was sitting down in a thoughtful attitude at a little distance from the former. I cast on her a look of indignation; her eyes were full of tears; but this shew of penitence did not affect me, and I placed myself by the side of her

her Lord ; or rather my good genius appointed me to that station. I sighed, fidgeted, and was so apparently uneasy, that observing a change in my humour, he asked the reason. His question kindled a sudden resolution. I said to myself, this man may be more worthy of my confidence than his wife ; I must have one friend in the family at least, or I may be as well at the distance of a thousand leagues as in town with my charmer. In consequence of this happy resolution, take what follows, and observe it passed in so low a key, that no one heard or interrupted us.

You ask, my Lord, what has flown away with my spirits, and I will answer you sincerely, that they have not been equal to the keenest, the bitterest disappointment I ever experienced.— Is



there a woman in the case?—Yes.  
—Then I sincerely pity you; for if you experience cruelty under a mask, where is bare-faced kindness to be met with?—The object of my passion is not present. I met her at your Lordship's house last Tuesday; lost my heart; and am willing to pay the ransom of my liberty to regain it.—Desperate young man!—Do not jest, my Lord; I have been too much trifled with already. Forgive my petulance; I really am unhappy.—Have you any opinion of my skill? if you have, open your complaints freely, and command my best services.—Dear Mortington, your goodness prevents my wishes. The Countess has a lovely girl under her protection. —I hope, my Lord, I do not misapprehend you. Olivia is so very dear to Lady Mortington and myself,

myself, that I should be sorry were you to undeceive the sanguine hopes I presume to form barely upon the hints you have let drop.—Your warmth restores me: Yes, I love your Olivia, I love her to distraction, one single view, one short hour, fixed me her own for ever.—Courage, Derwent! she has a heart, a valuable heart, to give you in return.—Shall I see her? Shall I endeavour to acquire this valuable heart? Will you assist me with opportunities for so great an acquisition?—You shall want no opportunity to convince her of your merit. She almost secludes herself from the world; but I will drag her from retirement, till, sensible of your assiduities, she quits it by inclination.—I caught hold of his hand. You recall me from death to life. This night have I been the victim of two

extremes, Hope and Despair.—But you have not told me what occasioned the latter.—Lady Mortington's reluctance to my visiting Olivia.—You mistake, my Lord, you was never more mistaken. I not only engage for Lady Mortington's approbation; but will go still further, and assure you of her best services to forward your happiness with our lovely friend, whose worth would reflect glory on a diadem.—Is it possible that I can have so much misunderstood her Ladyship?—Come, come, you are all in the wrong; you have neither seen nor talked with Lady Mortington. I honour your disinterested generosity, and cannot see your distress without wishing to relieve you. Our scheme was only intended to create a little innocent mirth, not to occasion unhappiness to any.

Away

Away flew all my ill-humour. I saw the rest, I saw it in no disadvantageous light to my dearest views; I thought that there was not a man on earth who ever tasted real joy but myself. Whilst in imagination I exhausted prayers and intreaties to overcome the obstinacy of Lady Mortington, I was the whole time pleading my passion with Olivia. His Lordship was unconscious of the Countess's design in this deception; but the appointment I tortured from her last Tuesday, opened my eyes. I saw it clearly; I revered her prudence; and adored her representative. Lord Mortington desired I would not let his wife know that he had betrayed her secret, as she proposed a fund of entertainment from the errors her supposed appearance might occasion. I stayed only to assure him of inviolable silence,

lence, and flew to my angel. Are you come again to threaten me with your anger, my Lord?—No, dearest—I was going to blunder out—Olivia; the appellation of Madam, rescued her delicacy from so terrible a wound, and me from destroying at one blow my present felicity.—No, dearest Madam, it is impossible to harbour anger against the person on whose goodness we depend for happiness. Since I parted from your Ladyship, I have been taking a melancholy stroll round the rooms, and calling myself to a strict account for the violence of my former behaviour.—Now that Lord Derwent is restored to his reason, my satisfaction is returned. Indeed, my Lord, I did not mean to offend you; my advice proceeded from friendship. There are a thousand women in the world more amiable

amiable than the girl you distinguished by your favour; fix on any other, and you shall have my best wishes for the success of your application. I rejoice, I cannot express how greatly I am rejoiced, at the change I observe in your Lordship's disposition.—Sweet charmer! she might, have spoke for ever; if she had not paused, never should I have interrupted the celestial music of her voice.—You congratulate me, Madam, on my change of disposition. If it is less gloomy that when I had the honour of leading you to Lord Mortington, it is not from any alteration in my sentiments, but from the reflection that, if your bosom is animated with one spark of humanity, you will become the friend of my passion, you will be my mediatrix with —With whom, my Lord? there is  
but

but one whose name, whose very idea, you must avoid. Renounce your partiality for Olivia, and direct my influence wherever else you please.—Dear, tormenting Lady Mortington! and I pressed her hands to my lips.—She snatched them from me.—I do not understand this freedom, my Lord.—I do not understand your Ladyship's perverseness; and I retook my trembling prisoner's.—Be not alarmed, Madam! my sentiments for Lady Mortington are those of respect and veneration; but for Olivia, a rooted, passionate affection, which all your philosophy will not be able to eradicate.—My Lord, if you are not more moderate in your expressions, you will drive me from you—we have many observers; the subject of our debate may be misinterpreted.—Time shall confute the wretched

wretched malice of such interpreters. Permit my visits to Olivia, and I will glory in publishing my happiness.—I have told you, my —. She was going to say more, when we were joined by Lord Mortington.—Complaining of fatigue, she desired her servants might be called. I flew to obey her commands, and had the exquisite reward of leading my disguised angel to the chair. The last words I whispered in her ear were these—remember the fate of Derwent is in your disposal.—She made no reply, and the stupid wretches, who were to bear off my treasure, not inspired with my feelings, carelessly dropped the head of her chair, turned round their clumsy shoulders, and trotted away with the same indifference as if they had been carrying a common burthen.—She was followed by Lord Mortington :



Mortington ; my heart, my very soul, went with her. What became of my remains I do not exactly know ; but suppose they were decently conveyed to Hill Street, for about twenty minutes after I began to pick myself up by own fire-side. Here I dozed over my good fortune, till all the servants in my family were busied in their morning avocations, and the little clock that stands over my chimney had struck eight. I started at the sound, packed up my reveries in the idea of Olivia, and carried them to my pillow.

If you are, or ever have been a lover, in reading over and over the account I send you of last night's transactions, you will find more to encourage than damp my expectations.

LETTER

## LETTER XXI.

*Lady Alice Sinclear to Lady Hassard.*

Cavendish Square.

**I** HAVE done with contrivances—the most unsuccessful events attend my machinations, cramp my genius, and impede my pursuits. I shall be with you on Monday.

Adieu !—

LETTER

## LETTER XXII

*Lady Nelson to Mrs. Selwin.*

Paris.

BY the date of this you will find, my dearest mother, that we are on our return to Britain. The ardency with which I long to receive the embraces of my tenderly revered father, and yourself, can only speak my transports at every step that brings me nearer to you.

We have now been in Paris six days; and, at the earnest intreaties of our friend,

friend, the Count Aluredus, fixed our residence in his house. Though we found the Count's bodily complaints much abated since we last saw him, yet the melancholy that preyed on his mind at Montpellier, was not in the least diminished. Our presence inspired him with a momentary cheerfulness : it was only momentary—it was not the character of his soul ; he fixed his eyes on a picture of Mademoiselle Aluredus, which hangs in the drawing-room, and a cloud of grief passing over his countenance, impressed it with all its former traces of sorrow. I have observed the picture I speak of with the greatest attention ; it is a full-length, drawn when the original was ten years old ; the subject and execution both exquisite. Whilst I am gazing on it, admiration is not the only sensation I experience ;

I rack

I rack my imagination to recollect in what beautiful face I have seen similar features: When I was presented at the French court in my way to Montpellier, I remember to have been much struck with the inimitable charms of a Madame le Mair; I have now but one faint idea of them, but am apt to believe it must be a resemblance to her that I discover in the picture of Mademoiselle.

Before we came to Paris, our dear Count had led a most sedentary life; still on the same unhappy terms with his brother, he confessed to us he never ventured from home for fear of meeting him. We prevailed on him one morning to go out with us; at which time he visited the Palace Royal; whilst in the carriage he kept himself as concealed as possible, and never stepped  
from

from it but under visible terror.— Through every apartment we passed, he first stopped at the door to examine who was there; and I once thought he would have fainted, on seeing the back of a man whose person might have been mistaken by a less terrified observer for that of the Duke de Deni. His countenance changed; he was retiring in the utmost agitation, when the cause of his sudden alarm, turning towards us, convinced him of his error; but though his fears vanished, yet he suffered from their effects the whole day after.

Sensible what a slave this good man was to his unconquerable apprehensions, and how painful the complaisance he shewed us; we gave over importuning him to accompany us on any future

future excursion. We made him exceedingly happy, by dispensing with his attendance; and he spent the hours of our absence in preparing us an elegant reception on our return, for he had the art every to vary our amusements. Yesterday we dined at ———, about ten miles from Paris; we did not come back till nine o'clock. Monsieur and Madame Tourville were of our party, and previously engaged by our hospitable friend to spend the evening with us. As soon as the carriages stopped, the Count appeared to assist us in getting out. His welcome was in an unusual tone; he gave me his hand; he smiled—a smile not to be described; but it filled me with astonishment, and he talked as he led me to the saloon with a vivacity which would almost have persuaded me that his heart had never

never been touched by misfortune; but if my amazement was great before, how was it heightened by what followed.

I here pause, my dearest Madam, to entreat your pardon for so long holding from you an event so interesting. The moment I sat down to write, it rushed to my pen; but as all passions are enforced by contrast, I was desirous you should see the Count in the miserable situation in which we found him on our arrival at Paris, before I presented him to you in the light you are now going to see him.

The folding doors of this magnificent apartment were thrown open—remember, Madam, I brought you to the saloon!—They were thrown open; Music, lights innumerable, a splendid



circle, formed of the most distinguished rank, proclaimed the once gloomy abode of pining distress now the habitation of animated festivity. I thought I should have sunk. I felt myself overpowered. I was struck with such a panic, I could not speak. I looked back on Sir William (he was escorting Madam Tourville)—his looks did not teach me the lesson of composure. I guess your surprize, Madam, said the Count; but you must still prepare for greater; (he pressed my hand) I am no longer the unhappy wretch you honoured with your friendship. He had time for no more. I took the whole for a dream, in which I was almost confirmed, when the Duke de Deni came forward to salute me. My dearest brother, (said the Count) there is but one woman in the world who is nearer than  
this

this to the soul of your Aluredus. The Duke embraced, and assured me with a politeness natural to his nation, but more peculiarly so to himself, that he rejoiced at an opportunity of renewing an acquaintance to which he owed the principle pleasure he had enjoyed at Montpellier. My visionary state considered, I did not acquit myself so ill as might have been expected, either in my returns to the Duke, or to the civilities I received from the rest of the company, to whom I was presented in a manner the most flattering. Sir William partook of the same kind warmth; neither were Monsieur and Madame Tourville neglected. The ceremony of our presentation ended, the concert began, which lasted till near eleven, when the ball was opened by the Count Aluredus, and I was honoured with his

hand.—Six months, nay even six hours before, I should have supposed it more possible that I should have danced with the French King.

How sudden, how rapid, are the vicissitudes which attend our uncertain state in this fluctuating world ! Any other time I could moralize whole hours on this extensive subject, but, at present, moralizing is not the habit of my mind.

Our minuet concluded, a beautiful bouquet on a gold salver was brought to the Count, who, placing the flowers in my bosom, said, with an affectionate smile, you are my Queen.—For this night, Lady Nelson, do me the honour to give such a welcome to my friends as may convince them I consider their  
presence

presence as no small addition to my felicity. This distinction was not the only one he paid me ; for, at the same instant he said this, he fastened on my arm his own picture in a bracelet richly ornamented.—Dear Madam, I must drop the subject of self, or I do not know to what lengths my vanity may carry me. The collation which succeeded was consistent with the magnificence, taste, and order, with which every thing here was regulated. All was joy, happiness, and decorum ; there was not less of comfort than festivity in our entertainment, and laughing time flew away equally laden with both.

The Duke de Deni sat next to me at supper ; and now, that I can look on him without prejudice, he stands second in my esteem to his excellent

H 3

brother.

brother. The Duke is addicted to shew and fashion, rather beyond what one supposes consistent with his advanced age ; this may be called an impropriety—a fault it can scarcely be called : and as it is the only error I can distinguish in his judgment, for this one I am the more ready to allow him a pardon. He enquired particularly when we heard from Lord Derwent. I told him Sir William had a letter from his Lordship soon after his return to England, which was the only one we had received.—Did I hear of his being embarked in a serious attachment?—My reply was negative.—Then I can inform you, Madam, that he loves, and intends to give the world a positive proof of his passion, by exalting the object of it to the rank of his Countess.—I said I was sincerely rejoiced

rejoiced at any appearance that might enlarge his views of happiness ; I did not know a more deserving, a more amiable young man.—The Duke seconded my praises with a warmth that testified the sincerity of his friendship for Lord Derwent.—I asked if he knew the name of the Lady to whom his friend was attached—that, replied he, his Lordship has omitted in the eagerness of his lover-like impatience to deck his mistress with all the beauty, graces, and virtues, his partial pencil could paint of real or imaginary perfections. I had a letter from him this day ; all that he mentions of her present situation is, that she makes a part of your sister Lady Mortington's family.—A thought struck me—I must have done with the Duke to tell you what it was.—Is it possible Olivia

should be this fortunate woman?—Lady Mortington may have many visitors, yet who is it that makes a part of her family but Olivia?—Lord Derwent has taste superior to most men; is it strange, is it so very wonderful, if the clouds of unprosperous Fortune have not been able to obscure the beauties, the excellencies, of our Olivia from his observation?—I would give a great deal to be assured my sanguine hopes were not devoid of foundation.

You did not know, my dear mother, we had left Montpellier. How unfortunate! Your letters are certainly forwarded there; of which surmise I hope we shall soon receive a confirmation.

The Count's company did not leave us till three this morning, which made  
it

it late before we assembled at breakfast; and as soon as it was ended, the Count led us to the library ; but, what passed there must be my afternoon's subject; for I am already within ten minutes of dinner and the motions of this family are all regulated to a nicety of exactness.

## CONTINUATION.

I am just risen from table. The French sit a long time at and after their meals ; and our repast has been agreeably lengthened out by the Duke de Deni's making one of the dinner party.

There is now as much affection discovered in the deportment of these noble brothers to each other, as not long since marked it with hatred and disgust. This mystery will be cleared



to you by my collecting such parts of the Count's recital, which he gave us in the library, as will best serve to explain it.

Yesterday, about half an hour after we were gone out with Monsieur and Madame Tourville, the Duke de Deni's coach stopped at the gate, and the Duke alighting, hastily commanded a woman who was in the carriage to follow him, and proceeded without asking a question to the apartment of his brother. The Count was that instant writing instructions to his agents who were in pursuit of Mademoiselle Aluredus; and as he reflected on her unprotected condition, as he thought on the difficulties to which, if living, she was in all probability reduced, a tear blotted his paper. Of a sudden the  
door

door flew open—he started from his gloomy reverie, and lifting up his eyes, the sight of the Duke de Deni nailed him to his chair ; he sunk back immoveable, almost in a state of annihilation. The Duke sprang towards him—he fell on his neck—he sobbed out, my dear injured Count, my friend, my brother, does Heaven once more permit me to embrace you ?—— His brother could not speak, but shrunk from his embraces.—My dear Count, you must not—you shall not—longer fly me—you have been shockingly imposed on. Suffer me to disabuse you ; and if I do not prove my innocence, banish me your sight—banish me from your soul for ever. A heart by nature so just, so tender, so benevolent, as the Count Aluredus's, could not resist an attack like this ; it

softened into forgiveness—it melted into affection—he no more shrunk from the fraternal embrace, but returned it with fervor.—Are you innocent, then, my dear brother? Say again that you are innocent; and I may yet be happy.—Best of men, I am innocent as yourself of intentional evil; though undesignedly I have pierced your bosom with sorrow, could all I possess restore your quiet, you should not another moment lament the loss of Mademoiselle Arlington.—Alas, Duke! greatly as I love, severely as I deplore, my last treasure, you are as much concerned in her recovery as myself—she is the niece of both.—The niece of both! exclaimed the Duke, staggering with amazement; (his visage pale as that of a spectre) gracious God! she is then—Annette

nette must be the child of our Maria! —The Count assured him that she was, and he wept like an infant. Recovering himself enough to speak, my God! cried he, what a precipice have I escaped? Nature whispered me I loved Mademoiselle Atlington; I mistook her voice for the voice of passion;—my designs were consistent with the strictest sense purity and honour; yet she might—distraction! —my own niece might have been my wife. But why, Count, this long concealment? was it kind—was it brotherly?—

Here an explanation followed: he ceased to condemn the Count; his reproaches turned against himself, he raved at his cruelty to his sister, as if this had been the first time it had occurred to his

his recollection. As soon as he became a little calm, and their mutual agitation was in some measure subsided, he desired leave to produce the evidence of his innocence. The Count generously assured him he was perfectly satisfied ; but his eagerness to remove the very shadow of suspicion could not be controuled. The woman whom he had brought with him waited his summons in the anti-chamber of the Count's apartment, and the Duke now stepping to the door, in a commanding accent, bade her to enter. "Woman, come in (said he) and answer for thy crimes to those whom thy arts have rendered so unhappy." — Trembling, she obeyed, a handkerchief held to her eyes, which the Duke snatching away, asked his brother if he could recollect to have seen  
that

that face on any former occasion. I do—I do, eagerly replied the Count ; this is the very woman I saw at your palace ; the very same who filled my mind with such circumstances as were derogatory to your honour—destructive to my peace. Stand still, wretch, said the Duke.—She was taking refuge from the angry looks he darted at her behind the Count's chair—stand still, stir not, on your peril, from the spot on which I have placed you. My Lord, continued he, I have long been miserable, because I could in no manner account for the perseverance with which you shunned my presence—it is true, Mademoiselle Arlington had escaped from my protection ; but, conscious I had given her no cause for so precipitate a step, I did not think you could possibly set down her elopement to my conduct ;

conduct; your rejecting all my advances, even to the sending back my letters unopened, began to make me suspect I had some secret enemy, who filled your generous mind with false opinions. The abandoned creature before us forged such a tale of your behaviour, the morning you meant to have blessed me with your presence; that though I rejoiced at your return; as, if, in giving you back, Fortune had exhausted her whole store of comforts on me; yet I could not but believe, from this wretch's declaration, that the fatigues and dangers you must have encountered in an absence of six years had disordered your intellects.

The story of her invention was this :  
—You rushed into the room where she was sitting, announced your own name;  
and

and enquired for Mademoiselle Arlington ;—that, frightened to death, at the wildness of your looks, she very submissively told you of her elopement, on which intelligence you stormed, swore, and raved like a madman ; that, in the rage of your fury, you demolished a pier glass, the fragments of which she produced to strengthen her evidence. A thousand other instances of insanity she asserted, concluding the whole with your having called down the bitterest imprecations on your own head, if ever you saw or spoke to me again. This was so unlike my brother, that in an agony of soul I grieved for his lost reason. You know, my dear Count, the steps I have taken to obtain an interview—your doors shut against me—all your friends denied entrance—what an appearance! You  
went



went to Montpellier. I followed you thither.—You were gone—I found myself in the same lodging you had occupied—I questioned the man of the house; his answers regarding the manner in which you fled, the moment of my arrival, confirmed rather than lessened my apprehensions. On my return to Paris, I consulted the physicians who attended you, and by them I was assured your mind was unimpaired, though you were giving way; they added, to a melancholy which threatened the most dangerous effects to your constitution. It was now that I began to discover the finger of mischief must have been employed in our disunion; circumstances that lately came to my knowledge of this creature's baseness opened my eyes, and my suspicions lighted on her. I last night brought

brought this vile incendiary to a confession, which the rack should otherwise have tortured from her. And now, woman, it remains with you to repeat your guilt in the presence of my much-injured brother; suppress not the smallest article, or know the severity of Justice shall overtake thee. She was by this time far less intimidated than at her first entrance; but the Duke's commands were not to be opposed; and what in her forced obedience she confessed, was in substance as follows:

After the death of the Duchess, having formed the ambitious design of making herself agreeable to the Duke, she saw his preference for Mademoiselle Arlington with envy, and determined at any rate to get rid of so formidable a rival. — She outwardly affected for  
her

her the greatest respect, and the strongest attachment, by which she acquired a solid place in her esteem; but though Mademoiselle treated her with particular marks of favour, she was too prudent to trust her with the secret uneasiness she suffered from the Duke's honourable solicitations. One evening, by applying her ear to the door, this wretch overheard a conversation which threatened the absolute destruction of her hopes, and convinced her Mademoiselle had it in her power to become Duchess de Deni whenever she thought proper. Something must now be done to defeat the Duke's intentions, and, on the foundation of that aversion Mademoiselle had shewn to the proposals (this female Machiavel had overheard) she built her infamous designs. The next day, certain to find

find Mademoiselle in her own apartment, counterfeiting a passion of grief, and shedding tears in abundance, she entered the dressing-room abruptly, when starting as if she had not expected to find her there, pretended to hurry back with equal precipitancy. Mademoiselle, surprised, prevented her retiring, and kindly enquired what had occasioned that appearance of sorrow? The artful hypocrite appeared to elude her enquiry; but at last, with much seeming reluctance, she said, her concern proceeded from her having accidentally discovered that the Duke harboured designs against the virtue of her beloved young Lady. Poor Mademoiselle, terrified almost to fainting, begged to know on what reasons she had formed a supposition so shocking;—when, according to a story she had before

before framed, such circumstantial proofs were produced of the Duke's base intentions, and of his purpose to have her conveyed from the palace to his villa in the country; that a mind less alarmed than Mademoiselle Arlington's might have sucked in the invidious poison. The honourable passion he had avowed was no longer concealed from her disguised enemy, and now her own fears taught her to consider the declaration of this honourable passion as a mask to conceal real villainy; her judgment told her how unlikely it was that a man of the Duke's exalted rank should seriously intend to marry an indigent creature of low birth, when the customs of France are so particularly strict in point of unequal alliances; though, had he seriously meant what he proposed, she declared to this creature

creature her repugnance to become his wife would have been unconquerable. She embraced the artful minion as the saviour of her honour; she overwhelmed her with acknowledgments that would amply have repaid the highest act of genuine friendship; and by the assistance of this treacherous woman, the same evening accomplished her escape. You have now, Madam, the sum of her confession, to which she added, that some months after, when the Count returned, contrary to the expectation of his family, she foresaw the end of her power approach; she knew the influence he had over the Duke, and that, if there was the possibility of a chance in her favour, it must depend on keeping the brothers asunder. This scheme, said she, succeeded; I expected no more; I could

could not suppose the breach I had made would be kept open for ever ; but misfortunes at a distance are better guarded against than those that overtake us by surprise. I have provided for the blow that has now overtaken me ; and, if the Duke will suffer me to enjoy quietly the fruits of his munificence, I can and will, my Lords, put you out of suspense for the fate of Mademoiselle Arlington, otherwise the rack with which I have been threatened shall not extort the secret from me.

Daring and bold as her conditions were, they were eagerly agreed to, when drawing a letter from her bosom, and presenting it to the Duke, she said, you will see by this, my Lord, how much Mademoiselle believes me her friend. Here the woman asked for her leave

leave of dismissal, which was readily granted; but she was sternly forbid ever again to set her foot in the palace de Deni, and, making a low curtsy, she marched off.

The direction on the back of the letter she had left behind her was not the writing of Mademoiselle Aluredus, but the contents testified her well-known character; alternately did her uncles press the paper to their lips, whilst the transports of our dear Count was almost insupportable. The contents are exactly these:—

## LETTER.

*Dear good virtuous creature,*

IF ever it is in my power to shew,  
by more than words, my gratitude to  
VOL. III. I the



‘ the preserver of my honour, be assured, I will not omit the occasion. I write this line to relieve your honest mind from the apprehensions I know you will suffer on my account.— Some English Ladies, of respectable rank and character, have taken me under their protection, I am now in Britain, and have bid a final adieu to France. Once I had a friend, whose presence made your country dearer to me than I am able to express; that friend, that dear tender friend, is no more; the peace, the happiness with which he watched over, like my guardian angel, one of his own family—one, the very nearest to himself;—has since attempted to destroy; but God Almighty has raised me other friends. Make your worthy heart easy; let it not feel a  
‘ pang

“ pang for me. I am as happy in my present situation as I ever expect to be in the course of a tedious journey, the smoothest paths of which are strewn with thorns, and made rugged by disappointments.— May, Heaven, good soul, reward the sincerity of your virtue, to which I owe my preservation.

“ ANNANETTE ARLINGTON.”

Charming—charming Mademoiselle Aluredus! If such purity, such piety as your’s, cannot be exempt from troubles, who is there that has a right to complain of Fortune’s severest persecutions?—This, my dear mother, is the reflection that occurs to me on transcribing the above. When the Count came to that part of her letter

12

where

where she pathetically laments her lost friend, the colouring was so strong he could not fail of seeing his own likeness; and the lively tenderness with which she preserved in her memory his former kindness, affected him to a degree of enthusiastic rapture;—it was the last addition but one his joy could possibly admit. The Duke stood confused (said the Count as he repeated this scene to us) but his confusion was not of guilt, it was that of a man whose humanity is shocked at being unintentionally the cause of affliction to a fellow-creature; and it was heightened by the circumstances of knowing it was the hearts of his nearest connections that he had afflicted. You may suppose, Madam, the Count omitted no endeavours to assuage the poor Duke's self-condemnation; and, I am persuaded

ed their re-union will not be less permanent that it has been sudden. Mademoiselle Aluredus already restored in idea, our inestimable friend was no longer the melancholy victim of despair, and you will now be able fully to account for our last evening's festivity.

The Duke proposes to accompany his brother to England in pursuit of his niece, and we are to be honoured with the residence of both at our house in town. Let me prevail on you, my dear parents, to meet us there; it will be hard to deny this request, as it will be impossible for me, with any degree of convenience, to leave London whilst our friends continue the guests of Sir William; yet, at all events, I must

give them the slip, if you are not disposed to indulge us.

We should have left Paris this week, but the Count's physicians have stamped a negative on our intentions; they say it will not be safe for him to set out at least for three weeks. His impatience is not to be described; the Duke's is but little inferior; of our own, I have no occasion to make professions, but we are obliged to stay; we cannot, consistent with friendship, leave the noble brothers behind us—gratify me with one letter whilst I remain here, it will shorten the hours of my banishment from your embraces.

I have not heard for an age from Lady Mortington. I can only account for her silence in the same manner I do  
for

for your's, that the letters are gone to Montpellier.

I long to hear Lord Derwent is really seriously attached—on many considerations I wish to have it confirmed. What a pleasing event, should Olivia be the object of his choice! A thousand times I have thought of those words—*she makes a part of Lady Mortington's family*. Is not the expression striking?

Adieu, my dearest mother! your next will relieve me from the perplexities of suspense.

## LETTER XXVIII

*Lord Derwent to Sir Philip West.*

Hill-street.

LADY Mortington is my warmest advocate with Olivia. The Earl courts her for me with the same avidity he would a mistress for himself. I sigh out my very soul at her feet, yet she is obdurate. Many chances are against me—one chance only in my favour; even that one poor blink called Hope, which keeps me from being froze to death by her coldness, she would extinguish,

tinguish, if I did not preserve it cautiously, and renew it at her eyes on every appearance of sensibility they betray. I keep an exact register on my mind, how often this little spark has been expiring, how often re-kindled. Here follows the sum total.

The next day after the masquerade, I flew to Lord Mortington's. She was not visible—she was indisposed—she could not see me—so said the Countess. I thought life odious—a Roman exit glorious. Lady Mortington went to her apartment—the arguments of Lady Mortington prevailed—she brought back with her my divine Olivia. Life was no longer odious; I was no longer a Roman. She received my devoirs with an air of indifference—bad. Her indifference was evidently coun-



terfeit—good. I seized her hand; the liberty displeased her—she drew it from me—worse. Its trembling convinced me her whole lovely frame was agitated—better. No more attack on her delicacy—the conversation general—a heavenly morning—my angel all smiles—all good humour.

For this visit my account fairly stated stands thus: in my dis-favour 000—in my favour, symptoms 3, partialities excepted.

Six attempts followed successively—I ventured only to explain myself by attentions, particularities, and so forth, without once daring to say, I love you, Olivia; though I had said a thousand times more to her at the masquerade. What the devil ailed me? I never felt myself

myself a coward before. Well, there is in real love a something of diffidence not to be defined—unaccountable—strangely unaccountable!—— My charmer visibly approved it—it seemed to gain her confidence by a sort of kindred claim to the refinement of her soul, and my vanity whispered me at the conclusion of our not unexpressive interviews, that I was rather debtor than creditor to Fortune.

Lady Mörtington goes seldom into public ; but when she does, Olivia now constantly attends her—I receive a hint on those occasions from Mörtington, and do not stay at home to whine and sigh like a puppy ; yet, sometimes, I have paid dearly for being of the party ; the admirations that meets, follow, and intercepts the footsteps of my an-

gel, has given me many a severe pang, lest another more daring than myself should be more explicit. Full of this idea, and an extraordinary bottle of champagne, I yesterday broke from our set at the Star and Garter, and was in South-Audley-street an hour before the time I had appointed for escorting the Ladies to the opera. Early as it was, I hope I was not unexpected; Olivia, at least, was not unprepared for my reception. I found her alone, and dressed for the evening; her charms blazed upon me in full lustre—I might as well have swallowed water as champagne—I was intoxicated; but I owed my state of intoxication to another cause; love, not wine, inspired me. I seized the moment of inspiration; threw myself at her feet, and opened my whole soul without reserve. Neither  
confusion

confusion nor surprize actuated her countenance; she entreated me to rise. I was deaf to her entreaties. She then offered me a reward for my obedience. I saw her snowy hand stretched towards me; the bribe was powerful; I grasped it as eagerly as the venal tool of ambition does the price of his prostitution. My sweet tyrant would have treated me more ungenerously than even those poor wretches are treated by the agents who corrupt them; for no sooner had she obtained her point, than she attempted to regain the hire of my condescension. I struggled to maintain my property; I told her it was mine by purchase, and I would not relinquish my right to the treasure she had given me. Finding it in vain to contend against a declaration so determined,

terminated, she smiled, and I remained in quiet possession. My tongue, now disentangled from its former restraint, performed double duty; it said, it swore, a thousand—thousand tender things, to which my heart warmly assented; but which it will be immaterial to repeat, unless you should ever be as much in love as I am, and desire from me a lesson of experience. Having heard as much as she thought necessary to her information, without considering the violence she did me by forcing me to suppress a million of assurances yet unprotested, her coral lips gently divided, from whence issued, in the voice of harmony, what I was to suppose her final determination; but I was not disposed to give all the credit she seemed to expect: a chrysalis harbinger;

harbinger strayed from her dove-like eye, to tell me her words and inclinations were at variance.

I have changed my intentions; I will not treat you with a syllable of what she said; if ever she alters her resolution, I will not give it under my signature that she has so much of human weakness in her whole composition as even to subject her to the very common frailty of both sexes—instability.

I must get my mother's consent—but how, God knows—without it, nothing can be done. Her motives for refusing the hand, the heart, the soul, I offered her, were not those of caprice or affectation; they were glorious to herself—they were flattering to me—but, my mother! there it sticks! You know my mother well, West—

Do

Do you suppose it possible? Well, I will not despair! perhaps I may yet prevail on Olivia to see her connection with my family in another light; if I should—call it not fickleness, call it the noblest efforts of mistaken generosity convinced by reason—but first, my mother.—A thought this moment occurs—more of it hereafter.—Oh, Olivia; why rest the peace of my soul on a point so doubtful?

Lady Mortington interrupted our tête-a-tête. I openly renewed my pretensions in her presence. She interested herself warmly in my favour, but without success—to that one single objection still invincible! Lady Mortington's politeness spared any verbal reflections on my mother, whilst her countenance spoke every thing. I  
thanked.

thanked her Ladyship for her Kind interposition; told her I was grateful for her change of opinion, and bid her remember the masquerade. My eye glanced a stolen look at my angel; her face and bosom were covered with a deep blush.—Lady Mortington smiled; and Olivia looked expressively at her, then at her watch.—She took the hint, and immediately their chairs were ordered.

On the whole I am by no means a despairing lover; in the midst of my darkest prospects, there are many little inlets for Hope to peep through. Now to my mother. I will let you into her present situation; and leave to your own ingenuity the discovery of my designs. Of late her Ladyship has been exceeding gloomy—whenever I  
call



call to see her, which is generally once a day, she scarce speaks; her only language is sighs and groans. I am continually pressing her to call in her physician; and yesterday morning, perceiving she looked more deplorable than ever, I begged, for my satisfaction, she would no longer delay this important matter, but send for him immediately. She shook her head—I cannot oblige you, Derwent.—Alas! you mistake my case—my poor wretched body is in good repair; my soul alone is disordered. My whole concern was now directed to her reason; and before I left the house, I enquired privately of her woman, what had occasioned so great a change in the disposition of her Lady. She told me her Ladyship's spirits were remarkably good till the Countess of H—— came to pay a visit.

visit of condolence; that they went out together the same evening, and from that time she began to perceive an alteration—a sort of thoughtfulness, to which her Lady was never before addicted.—A great intimacy succeeded: Lady H—— called two, three, four times in a day; that they frequently went out together, and she now feared her dear Lady's head was turned, as she did nothing but weep and lament over her soul, saying it would be burnt to a cinder in fire and brimstone. In this manner, said she, please your Lordship, does my good Lady talk, till my very hair stands an end; for if so great a personage as her Ladyship should be burnt to a cinder, what will become of us poor people? I smiled at her simplicity, and asked what other changes she had observed. Why, my Lord, a card has

has not been seen in the house these six weeks ; this is a very sad change indeed ; the servants declare to a man that they will leave the family unless their wages are raised in proportion. — Well, is this all, Mrs. Thompson ? Oh, no, my Lord, nor half what I could tell you—the other day, one of the house-maids, who was rubbing the steps to my Lady's dressing-room, and singing one of her old ballads, as ill luck would have it, my Lady returned with Lady H—— just in the nick of time, and hearing Susan's voice, sent for her to forbid her ever again singing profane songs ; that hymns and spiritual songs were all she would have sung under her roof—upon this, Susan gave warning to quit her place, and the butler in an hour after did the same ; in short, my Lord, I have enough to do between my Lady,

dy, the men, and the maids, and she burst into tears. I advised her to patience, and hastened home, fully convinced, that my mother's malady was incurable. I am sorry for it; though, on her Ladyship's conversion, I found my views of succeeding with Olivia.

Not one word more—it is forty minutes after seven;—at eight I am engaged—where, and to whom my punctuality will inform you.

LETTER

## LETTER XXIX.

*Mrs. Selwin to Lady Nelson.*

Selwin Cottage.

PROVIDENCE, my dear Margaretta, dispenses its blessings with a liberal hand on your happy, thrice happy parents. The child of their fondest affection, the child whose tender duty has supported us in our severest trials, is returning to our embraces; and Alicia, our dearest Alicia, lost to us before, is now all our own. No longer divided are our children in their powers  
of

of communicating peace and comfort to our bosoms. I suppose by this time your letters will be returned from Montpellier; if so, they will explain the source from whence is derived my present transporting sensations; or, if they are not returned, I have said enough to inform you, that Lady Mortington has seen her errors; that all our former apprehensions are over, and that you have now an amiable sister. Your father calls Alicia's return to rectitude the birth of soul—he has enjoyed more happiness within the last month, than in sixteen years preceding.—Every thing contributes to fill up the measure of our joy; your prophetic spirit directed you to the person whose beauty and merit has captivated the affections of Lord Derwent. Olivia is one of the most

most exemplary young creatures that ever nature produced; under the direction of Heaven, she has been the second cause of restoring to us our long-lost Alicia. How providential your meeting her in France, how fortunate your sending her over!—I owe her much—my price is nearly connected with her felicity, and, now an opportunity courts her to render that felicity perfect.

We share with you the prospect of returning happiness to your inestimable friend the Count Alaredas. I have known pain, I have tasted of regret, I have experienced disappointments; but the recollection of pain, regret, disappointment, only serve to make my present joys more exquisite.

The

The indefatigable bees from various blossoms collect their sweets—from various causes the human mind extracts its comforts—if a plant obnoxious to the nature of those delicate sweets happens in their way, by instinct they avoid it—the bitters that are strewed in the path of man he cannot fly from, but it is always in his power to make them less unpalatable by industriously gathering honey from the flowers of Hope.

We see without reluctance the necessity you are under of remaining in town, whilst your friends continue in England; and are determined to meet, or at least to join you there. Lord Mortington will not suffer Alicia to move in her present condition, and he



now not only consents to, but approves her staying in town, till after her recovery—the time which will confirm their mutual felicity draws near—she is not dispirited—the delightful thought of being a parent counter-balances those little fears, to which women in her situation are often subjected; she wishes me to be with her at the critical moment, and I have promised at all events to gratify her wishes. Adieu! my dearest Margaetta.

LETTER

## LETTER XXX.

*Lord Derwent to Sir Philip West.*

Hill Street.

**H**EAVY clouds often bring on the morning—a splendid noon succeeds—and a calm evening closes the comfortable day. Olivia frowned—dreary were my prospects! Olivia smiles, gloom is dispelled, and my views are no longer obscured by vapour.

I charge you, my friend, on your best hopes I charge you, to embrace my  
K 2 doctrine—

doctrine—to follow my example. Avoid what I once called the state of blessed singleness; look out for an amiable woman; let her convince you that a single state is not a state of blessedness—I disavow my former opinion, and beg pardon of the whole charming sex for having ever presumed to harbour a thought derogatory to their power of dispensing happiness.

Thursday I attended Lady Mortington and my angel to Bach's concert, and returned with them to supper.—The post was just arrived; my servant gave me my letters at the door, and I stepped into the library, impatient to read them, expecting that evening a letter of importance.—This cursed business was afterwards the means of making me appear the veriest fool in nature.

nature. On entering the dining-room, I there saw Lord and Lady Mortington, but no Olivia: Olivia was flown—her absence was to be accounted for a thousand ways. I was easy.—Supper placed on the table, servants waiting, she did not appear; my ease abated; I felt—I looked disconcerted. I stood at the back of my chair, my eyes wandering from one door to another. Lord and Lady Mortington enjoyed my confusion—they took their places—you need not wait, said her Ladyship, (the servants disappeared) and looking at each other, smiled significantly; prithee, Derwent, why so melancholy?—I did not answer this question, but still looked at the door.—Come, come, my Lord, said the Countess, for heaven's sake, sit down; let us go to supper; I am monstrously

K 3

hungry.

Square; it was about eleven in the morning; the table was spread for breakfast, but her Ladyship did not appear for more than half an hour. A middle-aged man dressed in black, his hair nicely powdered and turned up in a round curl, saluted me at my entrance; I had never seen him before; but he appeared to be at home and quite at his ease. I returned his salute with civility;—we entered into a conversation, in which he gave me to understand he had the honour to be appointed my mother's domestic chaplain, and that he was patronized by the Countess of H——, through whose recommendation he filled his present office. I wished to avail myself of his influence, in case such an auxiliary should be necessary, which consideration made me  
pay

pay him some slight compliment on his situation, and he did not seem displeased at the distinction.

In the course of our chit-chat, he modestly enough concealed his opinion in regard to his religious matters, which I have often observed those kind of enthusiasts are forcing upon you on all occasions. This moderate apostle contented himself with now and then glancing at the luxury, the vices, or dissipation of the times, without being either impertinent or unentertaining.—My mother's presence put an end to our tête-a-tête. Her pace as she approached us was slow and solemn; her face pale as ashes; nor could I help thinking the countenance with which her chaplain received her must resemble a

Newgate ordinary when he attends his convict on the day of execution.—I never saw a change so instantaneous, so glaringly ridiculous. We sat down to breakfast—my mother sighed frequently, talked little, and eat less—my appetite was taken away by the puzzling business of thinking—my brain was contriving a thousand methods to announce the subject of my visit, whilst the pious Doctor, seriously applying to the hot rolls, in conjunction with a comfortable bason of chocolate, amply made up for the deficiency of both by dint of his own masterly performance. My mother asked me what I had done with myself the preceding evening. I was at Bach's concert, Madam; after which I supped with Lord Mortington.

Son!

Son! my son! (shaking her head, lifting up her hands and eyes) Heaven turn your heart.—I once delighted as you now do in those profane, intoxicating pleasures. Just as I arrived at the very brink of perdition, the spirit awakened me to the horrors of my situation—Oh! may the same particular inspiration snatch you also from your present danger!—Converse freely, my Lord, with this worthy reverend divine, pointing to the Doctor, and he will convince you how much more rapturous enjoyment is to be found, when joining the songs of Saints and Ministers, than by listening to the band of Satan, who, by softening our poor weak souls with sounds of voluptuousness, easily makes us the prey of his devices.



The Doctor gave his assent with a groan ; he was too busily employed to ratify it more circumstantially.—Pardon me, my dear Madam, and I took her hand ; pardon me, if I presume to dissent from the argument you advance—I am a young man, but I have my serious moments ; and I hope no action of my life has been remarkably culpable. I reverence Supreme Omnipotence, I gratefully partake the good things Providence has created or instituted for our use.—Religion, in the light my reason teaches me to behold her, is not robed in terrors ; her precepts are mild, benign ; she persuades, she courts, but does not terrify us to obedience. Religion, though Queen of Virtues, is no enemy to innocent amusements.

Derwent,

Derwent, I have heard you thus far with patience.—Condescend then, Madam, to encrease the favour you do me by one moment more of your attention.—I sometimes think, but seldom speak of the subject we are now upon—Your Ladyship introduced it, and I wish to acquaint you with my settled principles, that for the future we may understand each other, and avoid re-eriminations.—I give you my permission, son, to support as well as you can your poor uninspired judgment; but take care not to defend what you call innocent amusements—Vice, destructive Vice, is concealed under that appellation.—Vice, Madam, shall not find an advocate in me; and I acknowledge my own insufficiency to give the opinions to which I am attached, their proper weight, I only mean to explain  
my

my sentiments distinctly.—Suppose, Madam, a great monarch invites you by his ambassadors to his kingdom, which is situated at a great distance from your present habitation—suppose from the munificence of his promises you cheerfully enter on the journey; previously informed what on your part is expected to procure you a gracious reception. Love and gratitude must naturally be the effusions of your soul, when you contemplate the infinite obligations this great monarch lays you under; no fear can possibly mix with those effusions but the fear of offending by neglecting the conditions into which you have voluntarily entered. Suppose, to make your journey pleasant and commodious, this good prince, by whom you are invited, has filled the road with refreshments of every

every kind to accommodate your body, exhilarate your spirits, or sooth your mind, on an expedition unavoidably fatiguing. Now, allow me to ask you, Madam, and I will venture to apply the same question to your chaplain; do you best testify your duty to your benefactor by adoring his bounty, and moderately partaking the blessings he sets before you; or, by turning from them in disgust, as if treacherously intended as a pernicious trap to ensnare your safety?

They looked at each other—it was not difficult to decypher the thoughts of either.—My mother, by her silence, evidently put it on her spiritual director to answer my allegory, whilst his countenance, spoke how much he was divided to preserve his consequence  
with

with her Ladyship, and not offend a man who has in his gift some valuable preferment, of which circumstance he did not seem uninformed.—Three audible hems cleared the organs of his speech, and the fourth was attended with a happy delivery.—May I presume to interpret your silence, my good Lady, as a command to answer his Lordship's application to myself?—She gave an assenting nod.—He stood up; his attitude would have graced a pulpit, but, like too many of our popular preachers who speak to gain applause rather than convince their audience, his doctrine was by no means orthodox; it was such a complication of rhetorical flowers and false reasoning, the daub of flattery stuck so thick on every part of my Lordship's character, whilst the faults and blemishes of human

human nature were so nakedly exposed, that I have not patience to rehearse his rant; I shall only say, the credit he gave to himself, and the approbation he received from my mother, made up for the indifference with which I attended to his elaborate, almost unintelligible harangue.—Sound without sense can convey no pleasure to a mind that is not qualified by ignorance for its reception. I did not appear inclined to lengthen out the conversation, he observed it, took the hint, and left the room.

Now was my trial to come on, or rather now was I to open my campaign—Love and war admit of stratagem, therefore no reflection on a lover or a soldier to adopt it.—Armed with the picture of my charmer, no matter how

it came into my possession, I thought I required no other weapon to overcome my adversary ; I presented it to my mother.—Did your Ladyship ever see a face so beautiful, so engaging as this ?—She looked earnestly at it, and seemed struck with surprize. I must confess, son, if the original is half so handsome as this picture, she might prove a dangerous enemy to the soul of a young man.—Satan has various modes of tempting us to destruction—beware of the temptor.—Dear Madam, Satan, believe me, has no communication with a mind so pure, so heavenly, as that which belongs to the person whose representation has engaged your attention.—Alas, my Lord ! you do not know the power of the evil one.—He must, Madam, be powerful indeed, if he can make the seat of piety, of wisdom,

wisdom, of purity, his vile machine to convey wickedness into a world already over-stocked with his agents.

Fie upon you, fie upon you, Derwent ! I tremble to hear you talk in this manner.—I beg your pardon, Madam ; by what expression have I been so unfortunate as to offend you ?—I don't like to argue, my Lord ; but you did not speak with respect.—Of whom ? my dear mother ; you cannot surely accuse me with want of respect to your Ladyship, and if I spoke feelingly of the distinction between virtue and vice, where is the crime for which I am so seriously rebuked ?—I smiled as I said this ; and taking her hand, pressed it to my lips. She saw her error, and almost returned my smile ; but re-assuming her new acquired gravity she sighed deeply.



deeply, then asked if I was acquainted with the Lady whose picture I had shewn her.—I replied with an air of indifference, that I had sometimes the honour of seeing her at Lord Mortington's.——And is she really so lovely, so amiable, as you describe her?——It is impossible, Madam, to exaggerate her perfections.

Take care what you say, son ; perfections do not belong to our nature.—Satan wrestles with us—we must rely wholly on the spirit—but you are not yet called. Alas! youth, beauty, birth, accomplishments, riches ; what are these but traps laid by the Devil to ensnare us?——She was now come to the very point I wished her to arrive at. In the fullest extent I allow, Madam, the propriety of your most just observation ;

observation ; rank, fortune, title, may be called the dress of human happiness, the refined part is of quite a different nature. The lovely, amiable woman, continued I, of whom we have been speaking, is infinitely more distinguished by refinements than birth or fortune.

The better for herself, my Lord ; it will make her turn her thoughts to serious matters. — Your Ladyship's arguments carry conviction ; there is not a crime so detestable in my eyes as the sin of pride ; yet we sacrifice, in support of this pernicious passion, our most essential blessings. Miss Mildmay would at this moment, Madam, be the happiest, as she is already the most deserving of her sex, but for the foolish customs of the world, whose modes

modes are founded merely on vanity.

—Explain yourself, my Lord.—Why thus, Madam ; Miss Mildmay, the lady whose picture you have seen, is partial to a young man of rank superior to her own, and the fear of disgracing him in the opinion of his family, withholds her from encouraging his ardent pursuits, though she knows he doats on her to distraction.

Why this energy, Derwent?—She shook her head. The subject is interesting, and my heart is engaged in the felicity of those lovers.—If they love, I would advise them by all means, my Lord, not to marry.—Is it possible this can be the advice of my mother?—Undoubtedly, that man or woman is undone who can draw his or her affection from heavenly, and  
place

place it upon earthly objects.—I thought, Madam, marriage had been a divine institution.—And you have not thought wrong ; marriage was a divine institution, yet we are not commanded to indulge our passions to idolatry ; grievously do we sin when we rob Heaven in the smallest degree of that transporting fervent love which should be all its own, and will not bear a division—Did your Ladyship marry my father on this principle ?—I was, when I married your father, the daughter of perdition ; I am now called to a state of salvation ; there can be no analogy between my former and present sentiments.—Give me leave, Madam, to ask you one question :—Were not the endearing affections of nature implanted in our bosoms by the hand of our Maker ? And do we, think you, render

render him service by endeavouring to root them from thence?—I have told you before, Derwent, I hate argument—I will not be puzzled; if you want information, apply to my chaplain.—

Dear Madam, be not angry, I have done; and according to the light you now place matrimony to my view, I can see no reason why a man should ever marry at all.—Yes, there are many reasons; and it is your obstinacy only that prevents you from seeing them;—in your own situation, marriage becomes a duty; you are the last of your family, and if you die without heirs the title is extinct.—Well then, Madam, since you allow this, I must inform you the man who loves Miss Mildmay is exactly in my predicament, and invincibly attached to her; but so great is her delicacy, so exemplary

exemplary her honour, that he has no hopes of a union with her, but through the interposition of his mother.—She started and turned pale.—I hope, my Lord ——— Dearest Madam, I will no longer dissemble; the very man now stands before you.—What! solicit a low-born wretch—a woman whom you confess has not even fortune to recommend her—court such a one as this to be my daughter! how dare you, Derwent, affront me by so presumptuous, so extravagant a proposal.

Her features as she spoke were distorted by resentment, and passion threw its crimson mantle over every part that was visible of her person. It was no more than I expected; I was prepared for the storm, and stood undaunted, whilst my ears were saluted

with a volley of reproaches, mingled with repeated commands to relinquish my designs, or banish myself her presence for ever. Words for a time came in great plenty to her assistance, but at last, utterance grew difficult, and tears succeeded.—Though I was not disconcerted at her rage, yet I could not witness unmoved a parent seemingly afflicted ; I threw myself at her feet ; I pleaded my cause with tender submission ;—ineffectual my pleadings ; I was told either to renounce Olivia, or expect her unremitting displeasure. I arose from my supplicating posture, and resolved to change the mode of my application. At this critical moment the door opened, and in stalked her pious director ; but he saw we were deeply engaged, and would have retired, had I not prevented him.

—My

—My mother's mind, said I, is discomposed ; pray, Sir, come forward ; your company cannot be displeasing. The Doctor bowed ; full of important curiosity did as I requested, and looked very much at my service. —My mother frowned ; ungracious son ! do you mean to expose me ? —I am particularly unhappy, Madam, that nothing I do can give you pleasure. —Mighty well, mighty well, my Lord, rising from her chair, and advancing towards the astonished priest, as my son has invited you to witness the distress into which he has plunged me, why should I conceal his undutiful behaviour ? Why hide his crime from you ? —Oh, Sir ! —Oh, Doctor ! —he has made me the most miserable of women —he threatens to bring a beggar into my family.



I took both her hands in mine, and respectfully seating her, insisted on her permitting me to lay open the circumstances of my situation; that I might not suffer in the world from prejudice and misrepresentation. She made an effort to silence me; I saw my advantage; it was my last resource, and I was not to be silenced. After saying all I had to say, the Doctor declared himself on my side, and managed so dexterously, that though my mother gave me no reason to suppose her resolution was in the least weakened, yet I saw by the abatement of her passion, that in a short time he would mould her mind to receive whatever impressions were of consequence to my felicity; and I saw too, with additional pleasure, he meant not to be sparing of his influence in my favour.

I concealed

I concealed this new reinforcement of hope as a *corps de reserve*, and rising to take my leave, I moved towards my mother with a solemn, pensive, determined air.—Farewell, Madam, said I, you drive me from your presence; perhaps for ever.—I am master of my own actions, why lead me like an infant? I am passed the age of controul. Why will you not repay my obedience with tenderness? My affections are settled invariably; if you withhold your approbation another day, I leave England—a country in which I have experienced repeated opposition, the last of which must be fatal to my peace.—She was touched; the Doctor interposed; but I broke from them, and made my exit. I had not been at home more than two hours, every moment expecting a message to recall me, when my

Aid-de-Camp rushed into my presence with the joyful tidings of having gained a complete victory. I do not want gratitude, and I thanked him for his friendly offices by a promise of the best preferment in my gift.

My mother had sent a message by him to request I would dine with her; and, in consequence of my readiness to oblige her, she received me graciously, said she would soon see Miss Mildmay, and if she answered my description, would not only consent to our union, but even become my advocate.

The certainty of calling Olivia my own, exhilarated my spirits;—the prospect of a good benefice had the same happy effect on the Doctor's, and I found his reverence no bad companion  
over

over a bottle; he is one of those who can be all things to all men.

My mother retiring soon after dinner, we drank our claret freely for half an hour, when I flew exulting to South Audley-Street, leaving the smug rosy-faced saint more than half a bishop.—  
The rest at my leisure.

ALFRED.

## LETTER XXXI.

*Lady Mortington to Mrs. Selwin.*

South Audley-Street.

**EVER** since I have experienced the  
comfortable blessing of a reconciliation  
with the bosoms of my dear affectionate  
parents, my ideas have been expand-  
ed, and my heart has unfolded itself  
to share the felicity of others. How  
how delightful, are such impres-  
sions! Every obstruction is removed to  
my Olivia's being the wife of Lord  
Selwin; and my good-natured Lord  
(him the better for it) is intoxi-  
cated with pleasure; in short, Madam,  
altogether a family of rapture.  
—Olivia

—Olivia writes to you, but she will not, I dare say, be one quarter part so descriptive as I am inclined to be. I go but little abroad, as my situation makes every kind of fatigue disagreeable; and I now begin to find home not only supportable, but pleasant.

The other evening as Olivia and I were employed at our frames, Lord Mortington entertaining us with one of Shakespeare's plays, Lord Derwent stole upon us. We are so used to expect him, he is so much a family man in our house, that my Lord, who was got into one of the long speeches in King John, did not lay aside his book when he entered, for my part, it was by mere accident that I took my eyes from my work, and casually looking towards him, I saw in a moment that

his countenance was animated with an unusual degree of vivacity.—He placed himself behind Olivia, and he leant over the back of her chair. She had not seen his Lordship's approach with indifference; the pleasure that sparkled in his eyes was transfused to her own—she has all the modesty in the world, but not a grain of affectation.—He snatched her unreluctant hand, and pressing it fervently to his bosom:—My dearest, dear creature, he exclaimed in a voice of transport, my mother consents to our union—can you longer hesitate?

The suddenness of this address filled us all with astonishment.—His mother consent to their union!—I protest I thought him mad; my Lord dropped his book, started from his chair, and stood

stood staring at him as if he was of the same opinion. To describe the emotions of Olivia is impossible.—Aurora's blush has been often celebrated by the Poets, but Aurora, in her gayest colouring, never blushed like Olivia; her blush at that moment, expressed all that can be imagined of love, joy, gratitude, and surprise; I may call it my first interview with those passions; I never before supposed it possible they could be so exquisitely expressive.—

Speak, my angel, my life, continued the transported lover, speak, and tell me I am not the object of your aversion.—Hold, Derwent, cried my good man, interposing, Olivia shall not speak; she shall not even look at you, till you convince me what you tell us of your mother is not all a dream; prove the reality; and as the most deserving man in the world, I will venture



to promise for Olivia's heart, that it shall be all your own. You bribe high, my Lord; but I will owe all to love, and my Olivia; my mother will see you to-morrow; are you disposed, my angel, to receive her visit?—I had taken her hand in mine; it was cold as death; her delicate frame could not support the tide of joy by which she was overwhelmed, she could only bow a silent assent to his question; her eyes filled with tears, she arose to conceal them, and pressing my hand, whispered—dear Lady Mortington, suffer me to retire; I am the weakest of all human beings. In a moment, Lord Derwent, was at her feet—why, why these tears, my beloved? you must not leave me; you are superior to affectation. Are they the tears of compassion? Do they flow from regret that you cannot command your inclinations to reward a passion

so

so strongly interwoven with my existence, as to render them inseparable? —I now really feared she would have fainted;—her tears and silence had certainly filled him with alarming apprehensions.——I am quite ashamed, said she, with having exposed myself; I must either declare what will cover me with confusion, or I must give Lord Derwent reason to suppose me ungrateful.——Dearest, best of women, honour me with your real sentiments, and fear not that I will take advantage of your goodness; the condition to which I have seen you reduced, has afflicted me beyond measure; I would not again suffer such torments for the universe.—I meant not, my Lord, to afflict you; I could not restrain my tears, they were not the tears of regret.—have I said enough? and a crimson blush dyed her expressive countenance.

——One

—One word more, and I will not further distress my angel;—will you consent to see my mother as the prelude to my happiness?—You leave me no choice, my Lord; your disinterested tenderness has a claim to my obedience.—The affection, — the candour, of this declaration, which was delivered with a sweetness and dignity not to be equalled, compleated his joy; —and Lord Mortington, who doats on Olivia, was half frantic; I hardly know that he has yet recovered his right senses.

Lady Derwent came the next morning; she behaved with a great deal of polite civility to her daughter elect (who was quite enchanting) she could not help being pleased with her; yet when first she was presented, I read in her countenance with what reluctance she

she had consented to her son's importunities. — Olivia acquitted herself with so much grace, gentleness, and respect, as could not be resisted; they produced a miracle, and fascinated her Ladyship so effectually, that she not only desired to see her often, but hoped she would not lengthen out the time of her son's probation by unnecessary delays. — He snatched his mother's hand, which he pressed to his lips — the eyes of Olivia sent out their dove-like harbingers to express her grateful feelings, whilst she assured Lady Derwent the affection, which it was now permitted her to declare for the most deserving of men, and the perfect submission she owed her Ladyship, would never suffer her to dispute the commands of either.

When

When this pretty scene passed, his mother was in the attitude of taking leave; so I shall say no more of her visit, as at this time I wish to avoid every thing uninteresting to my subject. The great point gained, other material matters are now set on foot; my happy, good-natured Lord is consulted on the settlements, &c. and is of consequence in a most important bustle; the lawyers will not want a spur to expedite their part of the business; but Olivia declares the grand event cannot take place without your presence, and that of my dear father—come then, I beseech you both, as soon as possible—my sister Nelson will in all probability meet you in town;—consider how many inducements there are to draw you hither, and let not the situation of your Alicia be omitted in the number.

LETTER,

## LETTER XXXII.

*Lord Derwent to Sir Philip West.*

Hill-Street.

**P**HILOSOPHERS tell us the mutability of human nature admits of realities, that death is the only certainty on which we can depend, that happiness is a phantom we often glimpse at, but never overtake.

When Olivia, glowing with sensibility, promised to be mine, I gave the lie to those philosophical assertions;—  
happiness

happiness was then my own ; I had it in actual possession ; but when I thought myself most secure, it seemed to be taking wing, it eluded my eager grasp, and I expected to have lost sight of it for ever.—This morning it again hovers in my view ; it looks with a smiling aspect—my Olivia is out of danger—my Olivia will now recover.—What I have gone through since I last wrote you, what I have suffered within these three days, as much surpasses the torments of the rack, as the mind does the body in susceptibility of pain and pleasure.

Monday we spent the day at my mother's ;—my divinity was all soul, no appearance of mortality in her composition, and my passion bordered on idolatry.

latory.—She looked, she spoke, she smiled; I saw, I heard, I worshipped. Why has she deceived me? why given me an incontestible proof that she is mortal? I cannot support the thought of her being subject to dissolution. How did I beg, how did I entreat her to draw up the side glass on our return from St. James's Square; Lady Mortington is apt to be affected by a confined situation, and yet she joined her entreaties to mine; but our persuasions were to no purpose.—The evening was not remarkably severe, but my dearest had only a thin lace cloak thrown over her shoulders—what business have such women with ornaments? Beauty like her's can receive no advantage from them;—for the future, I shall hate every part of a female dress, that is not, in some degree, instrumental to her preservation.



preservation.—I took every precaution in my power; I insisted on tying a handkerchief about her neck; yet, notwithstanding all my care, the next morning, when I came to South Audley-Street, I found her exceedingly indisposed; she would not make the worst of her complaint, which she called a slight cold; but soon after dinner she was so ill, that Lady Mortington prevailed on her to retire, and the physician, who was immediately sent for, threw me into all the horrors of despair, by pronouncing her disorder a putrid sore throat, attended with dangerous symptoms.

From that moment to this blessed day, on which her sentence is reversed, I can give you no account of myself; I have been in a state of distraction or stupefaction

stupefaction the whole time.—Last night I threw off my cloaths, which, till then, I had never taken from my back.—Doctor P——n assured me my treasure was quite out of danger, and I slept soundly.—Before I had this comfortable cordial of hope administered, day and night succeeded to each other without my being scarcely able to distinguish one from the other.—Sunshine and darkness are alike insupportable to the wretched. Her fever ran so amazingly high, that for twelve hours the clearest reason, the strongest judgment, that ever enlightened mortality, was in a state of obscurity ; yet in her delirium, there was more the appearance of reason and judgment, than is to be discovered in half the fashionable circles about town.

Lady

Lady Mortington, though advised to be more cautious, attended her with all the tenderness of a sister.—How is my angel adored in this family!—the lowest domestic in it seemed under the same cloud of affliction with their superiors.—A profound silence was observed through the house, and every countenance spoke agitation. I was never further from the object of my soul's attention, than the room next her own.—Mortington was the partner of my melancholy hours; and his distress could only be exceeded by what I felt.—I watched the Countess's coming out and going in to implore her compassion;—the agonies with which I pleaded for admission, she did not always resist.—The price I paid for those short interviews, another man might blush to acknowledge, whilst I  
glory

glory in confessing the thousand—  
thousand tears I shed for my Olivia.

By permission of her physician, she is to sit up for half an hour this morning.—Lady Mortington is to give me notice when she is disposed to receive me ; my going home and sleeping till then, was one of the conditions on which I am to be gratified with the sweetest of all gratifications.—I have not been able to fulfil my engagement with exactness—I have been up ever since five, and find from experience that grief and joy are equally the enemies of repose.—My visit must be short ; only one half hour—those physicians are hard-hearted creatures ;—I suppose they never were in love—one poor half hour !

I remember

I remember formerly to have mentioned to you an unfortunate quarrel that subsisted between my friend, the Duke de Deni, and his brother, the Count Aluredus; I have just heard from the former; they are both coming to England.—They have discovered a niece, the loss of whom occasioned the breach between them, and a reconciliation has taken place.

The Duke writes in raptures of Mademoiselle Aluredus.—Newton pities me for having so hastily disposed of my heart, and honours me with the compliment of saying, if I could decently recall it, there is not a man in the world whose alliance he should hold in competition with mine.—I long to see the Duke; I long to shew him my Olivia, to convince him I am not  
an

an object of pity, and that all the Mademoiselles in the world could not draw my attention one single moment from the beloved of my heart, much less move a link of that sacred chain which so firmly rivets my affection.

—The Duke and Count are coming over with Sir William and Lady Nelson ; I wonder if they bring their Mademoiselle with them ;—the heiress of so princely a house, will not want a husband ; if such be their design, perhaps I am the only man they could have miss marked for their purpose.

I love the Duke, and admire the Count's character ; but was their Aluredus celestial, and had I never got more than a momentary glance of my Olivia, I would have refused the title of their nephew.—A note from Lady Mortington !—My Olivia is got up ;

she bears the fatigue beyond expectation.—Farewell ! I go ; I fly ; my impatience will add another spur to the heel of expedition.

LETTER

## LETTER XXXIII.

*From the same to the same.*

**N**EVER again let a man depend on his wisdom, his discernment, or his resolution; never say I will do thus or thus; propose to act so or so;—in vain he proposes; he is insufficient to determine;—Fate disposes of him, and his actions are governed by an over-ruling Providence.

I told you a week ago, at which time I would have sworn it too, that the Duke de Deni, with all his possessions



sions added to those of his brother the Count, could not bribe me to cast one look but of indifference on a female of their family.—I said in the foolishness of my heart, how infinitely inferior must be their niece to my adorable Olivia!——I have seen this celebrated—Heavens, how justly celebrated Mademoiselle Aluredus—I omit the name of Newton, as I know her uncle's wish to have her only distinguished by the former.—I have seen her; I am convinced of my error; and pronounce her by far the most beautiful, the most admirable of all women.—I love her passionately! I love her, if possible, with more fervency than I have ever loved before.

The Duke and Count are transported at the effect her charms have produced; nor is she averse to my happiness; she scruples not to confess, that from  
the

the first moment she saw me, I was not beheld with disfavour. You see me still in the road to matrimony, though not quite so near the goal I once imagined; I have a more round-about-way to pursue, but sure of reaching it at the last.—Olivia's settlements were very near concluded; I had not been ungenerous, (they were the same with my mother's) and her friends approved them.—The case is now altered; I am to receive with my charming Aluredus, eighty thousand pounds! fifty from the Duke, thirty from the Count, besides double that vast sum at their deaths! They are the richest family in France, and are lavish to the heiress of their house.—Circumstances, such as these, must be considered, and will take up more time in adjusting, much more than I am willing to allow.



of Mademoiselle Aluredus; she yields to my pleasure with a condescension the most engaging. To convince you by what irresistible force temptations assaulted me before I could be brought to accept the best favour Fortune could bestow;—to convince you it was not in the power of mortal to refuse this favour;—I find myself under the necessity of being circumstantial.

Not a moment have I to throw away upon any man or woman in the universe, whilst my Aluredus is visible; but when she retires to her chamber, my day closes, and gloom succeeds the brightness of her presence; it is then I am at your devotion—it is then I shall feel something like transport in retracing with my pen every incident of which my memory has received such impressions as time itself will not be

able to obliterate.——Expect that my letters will resemble the patch-work in your grandmother's dressing-room; to spin a regular web, I have not leisure—I shall begin and end as it happens to suit my convenience; I only desire where the thread snaps you will endeavour to join it; and if you perform this task with tolerable clearness, I shall not hold you the most disingenuous of ingenious undertakers.

## CONTINUATION.

I enter on my defence—Olivia is charming; my heart has long confessed how infinitely charming!——Mademoiselle Aluredus is not less lovely; my heart also signs to the testimonial of her power.—The nicest eye cannot behold the one in a light disadvantageous to the other; or the nicest judgment

ment decide which is most distinguishable on the list of mental excellencies ; —if I have loved one with rapture, I feel, if possible, for the other an encrease of passion.

The scale is now poised ; keep it steady for a moment, and, when I have thrown in a few inferior considerations, observe with candour to which side the balance is inclined. Olivia, in giving me herself, had no douceurs of rank, riches, alliance, to make her gift respectable in the contracted sight of avarice ; yet, small as it was, had I never known Mademoiselle Aluredus, to me it would have been of more worth than diadems. —I felt a joy so pure, so sweet, so lively, in being the friend of her unprotected virtues, of raising their blushing heads from obscurity, and placing them in the view

of admiration ; I felt pleasures so unmixed, that I cannot even now relinquish it without a degree of reluctance, without almost wishing I had never heard the name of Mademoiselle Aluredus. One half of mankind will ridicule this opinion ; but the choice I have made may probably restore me to their good graces.—The other half, that is, such men as my friend, will require no explanation of a mystery, mysterious only to the narrow conception of hood-winked selfishness. You have some cause, I confess, to accuse me of duplicity, by opposing my practice to the theory I advance : perhaps you will tell me that a man who preaches the doctrine of disinterested love, whilst he acts in direct opposition to his own precepts, is a mere babbler, and should gain no credit from his hearers.—By no means am I acting

acting in opposition to my doctrine, if I did not love Mademoiselle Aluredus, independant of lucrative inducements ; if I could not give her the tenderest preference to all other women, I would die rather than marry her.——I have been the slave of Olivia ; I am now the slave of Aluredus ; the former would have made me blessed ; the latter will equally bless me ;—she brings me birth, riches, alliance, and let me add friendship, to which her uncles have bound me by the strongest ties of obligation.

The Duke de Deni has long been my friend ; I know less of the Count Aluredus, but enough to convince me that his is the most finished character human nature ever produced.——I now permit you to decide whether I am right or wrong in my proceedings ; but whatever may be your decision, my

M 6. face.



fate is already determined.—Next Thursday se'ennight, if the confounded lawyers are not dilatory beyond pardon, Mademoiselle Aluredus will be Countess of Derwent.

#### RECAPITULATION OF CIRCUMSTANCES.

Not a hundred years ago, as I was sitting by the side of Olivia, between the hours of two and three in the afternoon, Lady Mortington came into the room, and putting into my hand an open note, said, In this, my Lord, we are equally concerned.—Read, and prepare to answer it in person; I obeyed the first part of her command, and these are the contents:

#### N O T E.

‘Sir William and myself are, my  
 ‘dear Lady Mortington, just set down  
 ‘horridly fatigued at our own door;—  
 ‘impatient.

‘impatient to embrace you and your  
 ‘good Lord, we entreat you both to  
 ‘come to us at dinner—bring Olivia  
 ‘with you, she is exceedingly dear to  
 ‘us all.—Sir William is sending a  
 ‘message to Lord Derwent;—I have a  
 ‘presentiment, it will be more likely  
 ‘to find him at your house than his  
 ‘own;—if he falls in your way, pre-  
 ‘vail on him to honour us with his  
 ‘company.

‘M. NELSON.’

I told Lady Mortington she must go  
 without me; that since Olivia’s health  
 made it impossible for her to be one of  
 the party, I would not leave her to  
 dine alone.—Her Ladyship, replied;  
 that my motive for refusing the invi-  
 tation was so good as not to admit of  
 dispute; and, added she with a smile,  
 I will undertake to make your peace  
 with

interested about her, dropped my enquiries. The ladies did not retire early from table; my heart was with Olivia the whole time; their presence was a restraint upon my motions; inclination pulled one way, politeness drew another; I was uneasy between both; I knew not how to decide so as to offend neither.—Lady Mortington pitied my situation; she saw me apply to my watch, and smiled with as much intelligence as if she had said, I understand your impatience; immediately she proposed to withdraw.—I blessed her considerate goodness, and seized the precious opportunity. My chariot had been waiting more than an hour; I blundered out an apology to Sir William, and was making my exit with all imaginable haste, when at this critical moment, the Duke, who had attended the Ladies to the door of their apartment, returned.

returned. He laid his hand on my shoulder; Where are you going, Derwent?—To keep an appointment, my Lord, that I would not neglect for the universe.—Then it must be with a Lady?—I will tell you to-morrow if you do not detain me now.—To-morrow will not do; I am impatient to see your charmer; you must take me with you on conditions. Name your conditions.—You must sit in the chariot till I know if the Lady I am going to visit is inclined to receive the honour you propose doing her.—She has been extremely ill; the presence of a stranger may incommode her.—A mere trifle; what other condition?—That if the Duke de Deni is refused admission, he exculpates me from having any share in his disappointment.—Agreed, my Lord! agreed, agreed. He sprung forwards, rushed

rushed into my carriage, I followed, and away we drove.

CONTINUATION OF CIRCUMSTANCES.

Take the conversation in our way to South Audley-Street.—Derwent, are you serious in your attachment? Do you really intend to marry the Lady to whom we are going?—So firmly I intend it, my dear Duke, that all earthly powers united could not shake my resolution.—I am sorry for it!—Suspend your judgment, my Lord, till you are admitted to the presence of my angel.—Angels are very scarce beings; I never knew but one, and that one Lord Derwent might have secured to himself.—I never knew but one, and that one I have secured to myself.—Come, come, I have loved you like my own son; you cannot be that relation; but there is another connection which,  
if

if you are not obstinate, is yet attainable.—I make no doubt but your fair one surpasses the common run of women, but a less valuable husband, I suppose, might content her; I will marry her myself rather than you shall not be at liberty.—I laughed at his pleasantry; it was impossible to be angry.—I swear by Heaven, Derwent! if I do not think her almost equal to our Aluredus, she shall not be your wife.—Rest it there, my Lord; but who is to be the judge?—Not you, my friend; a blind man may better distinguish colours, than a lover the imperfections of his mistress. — Nor you, Duke; an umpire, whose judgment is biassed by partiality, ought not to be trusted with the weights of justice; appoint an unprejudiced man to settle our debate, and I will venture my last hundred on his sentence.

You.

You raise my curiosity to a painful height; now should she refuse to gratify it, I shall repent your indulgence in bringing me to her door. You shall run no risque in being refused; my vanity is concerned in your conviction—I will present you, my Lord, without the ceremony of asking leave; a denial would now equally torment us both.—The carriage stopped; we got out, and ascended the steps together. Before I proceed, take in this place the description of Olivia, such as she appeared to the astonished senses of my friend; in any other part of my narrative, the short sketch I shall give you would interfere with more essential business).—You are to suppose nothing about the introduction, till I think proper to make you an ideal witness of our reception; at present, you are to turn your mental eye on Olivia, and on Olivia only.

Lady

Lady Mortington's drawing-room is hung and furnished with green; on a sofa of this becoming colour rested the delicate frame of my enchantress;—her attitude was not one of those in which a painter would chuse to exhibit the portrait of a languishing beauty; but had he been inclined to blend the loveliness of a Venus with the chaste dignity of a Diana, what a hint for the execution of his pencil! One polished cheek reclined on a pillow, supported by an arm of the sofa, added, to the graces of exact propriety, the charm of negligence; her posture was that of ease, not of indolence.—Sickness had left the traces of its pallid finger on her animated countenance; but a robe of pale pink satin threw a faint bloom over the cheek that was visible—a bloom more suited to the softness of her appearance than the fuller glow of health,



health, which in other situations so exceedingly becomes her.—Altogether, suppose her figure the most interesting that can be described, felt, or imagined.—I have done with raptures;—admire you not with what coolness I can speak of beauties so exquisite? Is my pen, think you, dictated by passion?—No, no, I reserve all my raptures for Mademoiselle Aluredus.—Candour alone obliges me to do justice to the charms of Olivia.—Why will not the female world copy from Olivia? Why cannot they speak, act, and dress like her? to look like her I know is impossible; but their manners—a refinement in them—is that so difficult?—

## CONTINUATION.

I brought you to the door—I did more; I gave you a peep through the  
key-hole,

key-hole, and you have seen the Phoenix, destined to convince the Duke, that my Olivia could not be surpassed by his Aluredus.—My hand trembles; I am at a loss to paint the scene; take it then as I can give it, incoherent, perhaps unintelligible.—First, read the inclosed; it is the History of the Count and Mademoiselle Aluredus, presented me by Mrs. Selwin.

*Continuation of Circumstances why I  
should marry Mademoiselle Aluredus,  
and not Olivia.*

I am just come from my angel; my hand less unsteady; the cordial of her presence operates on my spirits, and I shall be able to indulge you with half an hour before she comes from her toilet. In the attitude and elegant dishabille I have endeavoured to describe—

Olivia

Olivia struck us at our entrance; I say us, for I was dazzled by her inimitable figure, as if this had been my first interview with the soul of beauty. The sofa on which she reclined froated us; I chose to go in without being announced; she had a book in her hand, and did not observe when the door opened. My best love, (said I, approaching her) I have brought the dearest of my friends to visit you; she started at the sound of my voice, and graciously arose to receive us.—The Duke de —— I had not time to pronounce his name;—their eyes met; great God! exclaimed the Duke, his arms extended, what, what do I see? at the same instant, Olivia, with a scream of terror, sunk down breathless on the floor.—I flew towards her, but she was already in the Duke's embraces.—Shall I confess my folly? Shall I tell.

tell you I did not behold her emotions with calmness, or the Duke's unaccountable familiarity, without being alarmed by sensations I now blush to recollect? I strove to snatch her from him; she was not quite insensible, and held out her hand, as if to intreat my protection; he would not quit her, but appeared totally unaffected at my rudeness.—My dearest child, cried he, my beloved Annanette.—He was going on; the sound of his voice effectually roused her, and breaking from his arms, her bashful face glowing like crimson, she thus interrupted him.—Leave me, leave me, my Lord; dare you insult me in the presence of Lord Derwent, who honours me with his affection?—I pressed the dear, trembling, apprehensive innocent to my bosom;—my life! my soul! my Olivia! be composed. The name of Annanette, by

VOL III. N which

which the Duke has addressed you, makes me penetrate this seeming mystery—you have been imposed on, my angel; I swear to you the Duke is not to blame; he never harboured a thought destructive to that heavenly purity for which I adore you.—As I said this, her trembling increased; the blush of terror and resentment, which had passed over her fair face, suddenly gave way to the pale hue of death; she panted for breath; her eyes closed; a sigh forced itself from her, that, like the stroke of a poignard, entered my heart, and made me rave for assistance.—The Duke, afflicted at the effects his presence had produced, was retired at a little distance till her fears should be abated; he watched her movements; he saw, as he supposed, the approach of death; his constraint vanished, and he mingled his cries with mine.—

Cur

Our screams brought about us a multitude of male and female attendants; but I beckoned them all to retire except Lady Mortington's woman, who assisted our endeavours, which at last proved effectual; the tide of life flowed gently through its transparent channels, and with it brought back our tranquillity. — Her Ladyship's servant withdrew; and Olivia, now looking round her, cast at the Duke a placid glance, devoid of apprehension, seeming to recollect what I had said in his vindication. I held one of her hands, and she did not repulse the Duke when he laid hold of the other. — This, said he, my dearest Annanette; this is the second time you have unintentionally distressed me; you flew from my paternal guardianship, and now that I have found you, my presence reduces you to a state bordering on death; listen to my

defence with patience; it is not a lover, it is your tender, affectionate uncle who invokes you.—My uncle! the Duke de Deni my uncle!—I will not be deceived—no, no, my Lord, it is impossible that you should be my uncle.

Her violent agitation threatened a relapse.—O! how I cursed my imprudence in bringing him with me. A discovery so important should have been made with the greatest circumspection; yet who could have imagined, who could have dreamt, that in my gentle Olivia he should discover, he should find his divine Aluredus.—I threw myself at her feet—Loveliest, most delicate, most prudent of women, hear, I beseech you; hear with calmness the wonders your uncle has to relate; he is your uncle; he is the friend of your Derwent.—Rise, rise, my dear Lord,

Lord, (and she stretched out her hand) my reason is tottering on its foundation; I cannot disbelieve, yet how can I credit a paradox so astonishing, that Annanette, the daughter of honest, but obscure parents, should be niece to the Duke de Deni?—You are neither, my dear child, replied the Duke with energy, you are neither Annanette or the daughter of obscure parents, your mother was my sister, my ill-treated, my regretted, my beloved sister.—And did you know of this connection, my Lord, at the time?—She stopped; she looked down; a modest shade, deeper than the tint of full-blown roses, flushed upon her cheeks.—Spare your question, my beloved child; I adore your delicacy; I see by your confusion to what point it leads you.—No, my love, when I courted you for my wife, I call Heaven to wit-



ness I was uninformed as yourself of the insurmountable bar Providence had placed between us; I always imagined Arlington was your real mother.— Good God! I am not then her daughter; you tell me I am your niece!— Think that I am your uncle; know me for your paternal uncle; and that I never entertained an idea injurious to your honour.—She dropped; the angel dropped on her knees before him.— Now, now is the Duke de Deai entitled to my duty, my veneration, my obedience? will he forgive the errors which imposition blinded me to commit?— He raised and embraced her;—I can scarcely, said he with an air of pleasantry, pardon Annanette for flying my house at the artful instigations of a vile incendiary; I can scarcely pardon Olivia for the unkindness with which she received me; but the virtues  
of

of my Aluredus reconcile both to my affections. Aluredus! echoed she, —Yes, my love, you are no longer Annanette Arlington, but Aluredus Newton. —Am I then an Aluredus? Oh, my Lord! with what emotions of gratitude, of love, of respect, does my soul rise to meet that dear, that revered name? Did he too—did that blessed saint know that I was the unfortunate daughter of his sister? —At the name of Aluredus her eyes filled, and tears burst from them in a torrent as she asked this question. I was moved beyond expression; I caught her in my arms, and would not allow the Duke to convey to her heart the sounds of exulting happiness. —That mortal, who had first told her the Count was living, would have been the object of my unconquerable envy. By a look I asked his permission to take on myself the delight-

ful office; and by the same silent language he returned a gracious assent. I had seen the effects of a too sudden surprize, which put me on my guard; and I administered the cordial, drop by drop.—Without this precaution, we should have been all undone; she must have sunk under the weight of joy, which, notwithstanding all my prudent measures, she was barely able to support. How lively, how exquisite her transports, when assured of the Count's being not only alive, but that I had dined with him that very day at Sir William Nelson's.—She wept; she smiled; she lifted up her hands; she returned thanks to Heaven in a frantic kind of extacy; she would have flown to throw herself at his feet, and her tears redoubled by the methods we used to restrain her. She had not been in the air since her illness; to have ventured

tured her abroad at that time of the evening, would have been madness; but our dissuasions were all in vain; we were at last obliged to place her on the sofa, and keep her a prisoner between us.—When the force of her agitations was a little spent, so that I could leave her with any degree of comfort, I slid out of the room without dropping a word of my design, giving her in charge to the Duke by a look which he perfectly understood. My own chariot was not in waiting; I stepped into a hackney coach, and drove to Sir William Nelson's.

## CONTINUATION.

When the Duke de Deni wrote me of the reconciliation that had taken place with his brother, had he mentioned the circumstance of his niece

being sheltered in England, I should not have been surprized at his finding her in the person of Olivia; but this explanation he omitted. I knew the history of Annanette; I knew she had flown from his protection, and the troubles her flight had occasioned; every particular of this nature, I received from himself when I was last at Paris, and the amazing discovery his brother had made to him, that her real name was Aluredus, and that she was the daughter of their only sister, he afterwards communicated to me by letter. How flattering to my vanity the compliment with which his last was concluded, how flattering now to my passion—the former consideration I disregarded; by the latter, my felicity is augmented.—Thursday se'ennight! what an age shall I think it to Thursday se'nnight!

CONTINUATION.

## CONTINUATION.

It was about nine when I got to Sir William Nelson's; and before I ascended to the drawing-room, I directed the servants in waiting to get up Lady Mortington's carriage with all possible expedition. I took it for granted the whole party would return with me to South Audley-Street, which made me collect my senses enough to give those directions, that nothing might retard my impatience to carry back to my beloved that happiness her heart panted to receive.—The two Ladies, the Count, and Lord Mortington, were at cards; Sir William looked on and seeing me enter alone, they all with one voice enquired what I had done with the Duke.—He is engaged, I replied, a thousand times more agreeably than  
N 6      yourselves;—

yourselves;—I have often wondered what pleasure this painted trash can convey by its touch (taking up one of the packs which I shuffled, hardly knowing what I said or what I did). —Nonsense, cried Lady Mortington, pushing me aside, clubs are trumps; you are the most unfashionable man in the universe.—Clubs are trumps, my Lord, turning to the Count.—Don't talk, said I, of clubs; my thoughts are running upon hearts.—Why did you leave Olivia then so early?—I will punish you for that inuendo.—Your Ladyship shall lose your *sans-prendre*.—I defy you, my Lord;—will none of you hear me, good people? Clubs are trumps—lose my *sans-prendre*! impossible—six trumps, five matadores, and a king.—You lose it, notwithstanding, and I mixed her cards with the pack I held in my hand.—a laugh succeeded,

ed, in which she joined with all the good humour imaginable.—I knew your Ladyship would not be angry.—But I am angry, and will tell Olivia.—Deal again, Lord Mortington.—First, my dear, let us hear what Derwent has to say; don't you see he is brimful of something?—Ridiculous—yes, I know he is brimful of mischief.—And so your Ladyship will expose me to Olivia?—Most certainly.—Come away then, Madam, do not threaten, but perform.—A servant entered—your Ladyship's carriage.—This is unkind, sister, said Lady Nelson.—Sir William and the Count looked surprized, it being before determined they were all to sup together.—Is the carriage here by your orders, my Lord? asked the Countess.—Not by my orders positively, replied Mortington.—Well, then, continued she, this mistake is monstrously



monstrously ridiculous; surely the servants are mad.——I believe not, Madam; nor is there any mistake.; I had the honour to deliver your Ladyship's commands for the carriage.——I hope you will confess that you had also the honour of forging those commands.——My crime cannot be called actual forgery, I only took the liberty of preceding your orders by a few moments; I foresaw you would sup at home with all this company, and provided against delays.——There is something more than humour in all this, said Lord Mortington; let us into your confidence; convince us it is necessary we should change the system of our plan, and we will sup here or at home; you shall conduct us as you think proper.——But will Lady Mortington, Lady Nelson, Sir William, and the Count, consent to your proposal?—Yes, all, all, they replied.——

plied.—Well, then, I will tell you, my Lord, your conjectures are not groundless; I am not acting from the mere wantonness of mirth; the spirits in which you see me return to you proceed from a real augmentation of heartfelt happiness; I admit no sentiment of that nature with which Olivia is not connected, and in the occasion of my present joy, she is more particularly concerned than I am; she is acknowledged by a family of rank more distinguished than my own, and of virtues infinitely superior to their nobility.—One of those generous, tender relations, who has but just made himself known, I left with her when I came hither to acquaint you with the happy event—The other—the other, who has been more than a father to my Olivia, who, next to Heaven, is the nearest, dearest object of my soul's affection;

fection ; that other she has not yet seen, the Count Aluredus can only bring him to her presence.

Great and good God ! he exclaimed, his arms extended towards me ; I rushed into them ; the parent of your lovely Aluredus must be the parent of Derwent ; my tears fell in sympathy with his, whilst he pressed me to his heart in an agony of joy almost too great for utterance.—Happy, happy child, cried he, how glorious the situation in which thou art restored to me ; complete, my dear son, the felicity you have opened to my view, conduct me to my soul's darling.—Sir William and Lady Nelson, Lord and Lady Mortington, clung about him ; no sound but of congratulation was to be distinguished ; he distributed among them his blessings, his thanks, his praises, his embraces ; they had

had all been instrumental to the preservation of his angel, and the fervent tribute of gratitude he paid them was proportioned to the exquisite sense in which he felt her obligations.—My carriage was by this time arrived; both were standing at the door; but we so contrived our matters as to crowd ourselves into Lord Mortington's coach, without a thought of incommoding each other; it was first drawn up, and there was not one amongst us all who would be left behind for an instant to take a more convenient situation. As we got in, so we got out of the carriage; the step let down, idle compliments did not hold us back, or ceremony impede our passage. We proceeded, but with less rapidity, to the drawing-room.—Stop here, West, you go no further, it would be presumptuous for a mortal to depicture  
the

the seraphic interview; it was the interview of superior beings; angels only should have assisted at it.

CONTINUATION.

My moments since this blessed evening have been all white, not one streaked with regret, or marked with discontent. What will become of you and the rest of mankind? Joy, Love, Peace, and Felicity, which, led by Fortune, have hitherto illumined the world, are no longer visible to the world; they have altered their course; they are fled hither; we engross them all; you must never expect to see them dance out of our circle, but you are invited, warmly invited, to come to their home, and partake with us their influence.—I have not entered my own house this fortnight; prithee, Sir Philip, take it off my

my hands; I send the deeds by Colonel M——; your acceptance I make the test of your friendship; when you are settled in it, I shall again visit it with pleasure; you know the narrow, almost sacrilegious idea which possessed me when I made the purchase.—If you should follow the example I shall set you, and find the house inconvenient for a family, you may hand it over from bachelor to bachelor, till, like themselves, it moulders into dust without leaving a trace by which posterity can discover it has ever been erected. I am now an inmate of Lord Mortington's family, and a house is fitting up in St. James's-Square for the reception of its divine mistress.—The Duke and Count continue with Sir William Nelson during my novitiate; but as soon as I have taken the vows, they are to be my guests till the beginning  
of

of summer, when I have promised to attend them with my beloved wife to their own country. — Our time will be divided between the two kingdoms, as long as these inestimable relations of my Aluredus are continued to our ardent wishes.

We held a cabinet council the morning after the great discovery, when it was agreed, that her first appearance as their niece must be at court, preparative to our marriage; and as my wife, she will have the same ceremony to go through again. — My wife! Heavens! what will be the exultation of my heart? How will it throb with pleasure under the weight of my transports! — Never did the same passion express itself so exquisitely, yet so differently, as in the minds of those generous brothers. Joy has a similar effect to wine, on the  
Duke

Duke de Deni ; he hugs one, he kisses the hand of another ; he is here, there ; you see him in every corner of the house ; he springs like a boy at leap-frog ; he varies his attitude faster than your eye can follow him ; he talks incessantly, but the most interesting subject cannot for three seconds fix his attention ; he laughs till he cries ;—we laugh with him, or should become quite unacquainted with the sound of our own voices ; he has a fund of humour, and it is no blemish on the understanding to pay it this tribute ; a cynic would find himself compelled to join in the mirth he raises.

——The Count Aluredus, with more of sensibility in his composition than I have ever met with in any human creature, is equally under the dominion of joy ; but joy does not intoxicate him to act with extravagance ; his  
heart



heart might be called a pure crucible ; joy comes from thence refined by reason, mellowed by piety ; it mixes in all his words, in his looks, in his actions ; there is nothing boisterous in its expression, yet its force is not distinguishable ; the Count Aluredus's joy is rather to be seen than heard.—When he thanks Mrs. Selwin, Lady Nelson, and the Countess, for having been the friends of his adopted child, you then behold it tempered by a reflection of what that darling child suffered before she found an asylum in their protection—when he folds me in his arms, when he tell me his Aluredus shall be mine, when he flatters me I have deserved her love, and blesses me in the same breath with which he blesses her, then his joy must be visible to any other eye, from mine it is concealed ; I am blinded by the glare of my own transports ;

ports ; but when he gazes on the darling of his soul, when he calls on the spirit of her mother to witness his felicity, it is then that his joy blazes with a brightness almost radiant.

## CONTINUATION.

Half the hours which are thought necessary by the dronish sons of stupidity for the purpose of repose are enough for me; the other half I steal from sleep to dedicate to you and recollection.—I never feel an alloy to my happiness but when I brood over the train of misfortunes by which the Count Aluredus has been pursued.—Five years the venerable body of that best of men was loaded with irons by accursed Pagans, whose hearts were harder than the chains in which they bound him;—he will carry the marks  
of

of their barbarity to his grave; and whilst their infernal whips entered his flesh, famine opened its hungry jaws to devour him.—Forced to labour with brutes, unrefreshed by human society, he languished out his miserable captivity. Not for the universe would I have my gentle Aluredus acquainted with his unprecedented sufferings; to her he has accounted for his long absence by causes more supportable. His escape from slavery was miraculous.—Nothing but a miracle could have restored him to us; take here a short sketch of this singular event.—One sultry afternoon, as the Count was employed in dragging a vast weight, to which three other unhappy slaves were also harnessed, he fainted in putting his strength to its full exertions.—What happened after he dropped upon the earth, he does not remember; but imagines

gines, from the wounds with which he was covered, that the overseer, believing him dead, had confirmed his opinion by the cuts and slashes with which he had mangled his body, and had left him behind as useless lumber, throwing the supposed corpse into a shallow pit, near the place where our dear Count fell down. Day was ebbing fast when he first began to feel himself alive, and he resigned himself to his fate with a calmness, a magnanimity, which never deserts him in the most trying situations.—The groans he uttered from the extreme agony of his wounds, drew towards him two men who were crossing a path near the place where he lay expiring.—These men were habited as Infidels, but their hearts were not insensible to compassion; they jumped into the pit to examine the miserable creature whose lamentations excited their pity,

pity, and lifting him out, they laid him gently on the grass. In performing this charitable office, one of them looking narrowly at the Count's features, cried out to his comrade in the French tongue, that it was their noble commander the Count Aluredus !—What a comfortable sound ;—the Count was not able to speak, but crossed himself several times to shew they were not mistaken, and by his motions implored their assistance.—These renegades were taken prisoners when he lost his liberty, and had gained credit in the country by embracing Mahometanism.

The fondest parent was never more adored by his children, than the Count Aluredus by all those who fought under his command ; his humanity, his generosity, his affability, gained him the highest reverence ; there was not a man  
but

but would cheerfully have given up his own life in defence of the Count.—No wonder then, that in meeting these renegades he met with his preservers; they had retained their love and veneration for their great, their good Captain, even after they had yielded up a more superior duty. They threw themselves on their knees before him; they washed with their rude tears the gashes cruelty had imprinted on his emaciated body; their tears were not a common atonement; they were not used to flow, perhaps they were the first tribute their rugged hearts had ever paid to tenderness.—I do not mean to give you the Count's adventures at large; here ends my heart-rending recital.

I have presented my Aluredus and her uncles to my mother; her ideas are not so far ascended in their flight

to Heaven, but that she can look down with extasy on the difference between Olivia, whom nobody owned, and the heiress of a splendid family, deified by her relations.

The extreme Lady Derwent has lately fallen into, has given me a great deal of occasional anxiety.—I have had some conversations with her chaplain on the subject; he regards me as his future patron, is disposed to oblige me, and does not want understanding.—I have all the reason in the world to hope that my arguments, supported by the inclination of this reverend dictator, will in time reduce my mother's excess of piety to the medium of reason. I would extract the dross of ostentation from the humble purity of religion—I would not have Lady Derwent again too much  
in.

in love with the world; I only wish her to think and speak of its innocent enjoyments with less austerity.

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## LETTER XXXIV.

*Lady Nelson to Madame Tourville.*

Bond Street.

I HAVE many inducements to comply with the request you made me at parting; that of transmitting Sir William's thanks and my own to our Parisian friends, is by no means the smallest. Many are the acknowledgments we send you, but they cannot be numbered with the civilities we have received from Monsieur and Madame Tourville.

The Duke de Deni and the Count Aluredus have recovered that amiable

o 3

niece,



niece, in pursuit of whom they accompanied us to Britain; they have found her on the very point of bestowing her hand on your favourite, who was distinguished at Montpellier by the appellation of the handsome Englishman.—

Had the uncles of Mademoiselle Aluredus looked through the world for a husband deserving of her, their choice must have fallen on Lord Derwent.—

His disinterested passion, before he knew of any advantages she possessed independent of nature and education, marks him of all men the most deserving of her. I told Mademoiselle this morning I was going to write to you; I asked if she had any commands?—

Oh, Lady Nelson! replied the sweet grateful creature, a tear falling on her fair cheek, tell your amiable friend, tell my dear benevolent Madame Tourville, that I shall never forget to date  
the

the æra of my happiness from her appearance at the humble cottage in which I was once sheltered.—I guess your surprize by what my own has been on finding the Olivia, who, through your recommendation, I sent over to my mother, was niece to the Duke de Deni and the Count Aluredus.

—When she attends her uncles to France, she will let you into the particulars ; they are much too long for a letter, or I would not leave your curiosity ungratified.—I have another message from Mademoiselle Aluredus.

The poor cottagers who afforded her a comfortable shelter in the hour of her distress, are the objects of her kind consideration ; it is her request that you present to them the enclosed draft on the Count's banker, and to assure those honest, worthy people, this is not the last mark they are to receive of her

o 4 remembrance.

remembrance.—My father and mother, who arrived in London two days after us, have given a third of their hearts to Mademoiselle Aluredus, yet Lady Mortington and myself do not find we are impoverished by her sharing them with us.—Except the interview between her and our dear Count, which it is not in language to describe, I have never seen any thing more affecting than her interview with my mother; she threw herself at her feet; there was so much energy, so much eloquence in her expressions, her attitude so strikingly graceful, that it is impossible to determine whether the sight, untired with gazing, or the ear with hearing, was most highly gratified.—The Duke thanked my mother with a lively polite gallantry; but the Count's acknowledgments were penetrating.—There was not a dry eye in our circle;

cle; my dear good mother was overwhelmed; her exquisite feelings of pleasure nearly bordered on distress. —The Count has presented her with a superb set of dressing plate—to Lady Mortington a watch and chain, set with diamonds—I am ashamed to tell you, Madame, that, by the same generosity, I am possessed of a necklace and ear-rings, which my husband's fortune will scarcely entitle me to wear with propriety.—We are infinitely pained to accept such extravagant proofs of the Count's favour, but our acceptance was unavoidable.—You will find yourself on his return to France under the same necessity;—by all your address you will not be able to withstand his mode of forcing on you what he will call a memento of his Aluredus's merit, which had the power of raising her friends in defiance of Fortune's persecution.

secution.—I am called away—Lady Mortington is taken ill.

Three in the Morning.

I have left Lord Mortington the most transported of men—I thank God, my dear sister is in safety, and two hours ago she made him the father of a fine boy;—the little brat has occasioned a deal of trouble to his poor mother, which I hope he will repay her for in future.—I am come home fatigued to death; the packet sets off to-morrow, which makes me take up my pen to signify, in the sincerity of my heart, that neither time or absence can ever abate my perfect regard and esteem for my dear Madame Tourville.

LETTER

## LETTER XXXV.

*Lady Alice Sinclear to Lady Hassard.*

Cavendish Square.

THE deuce take Lady A——'s importunities—I should only have passed through London in my way to—— if it had not been for her—she was going to town on Saturday, I must stay till then—it would be the greatest cruelty in the world to let her travel alone.——Well, out of my abundant good-nature, I complied.—What had I to do with good-nature?—I hate good-nature, it draws one into more scrapes than enough.——Sunday too she must drag

drag me to court—it is horrid impertinent in people to press one to do the thing which is contrary to our inclinations, but this imperious woman makes all who venture near her ridiculous as herself; I could weep over the inexcusable weakness of my nature.

The drawing-room was fuller than I ever remember to have seen it, except on a birth-day—so many spectators of my mortification, it is insupportable!—I took my place in the circle next Lord Hillman, the *Daily Gazette* of our fashionable parties, and I read intelligence extraordinary in capital characters on the front of this calf-skin folio.—I asked him of what nature?—He replied to my question by another.—How long has your Ladyship been out of the world?—Long enough, my Lord, to have a thousand  
strange

strange events happen in my absence, and I apply to your Lordship for information.—Then, perhaps, you have not heard of the remarkable presentation which is this day expected?—Not a word of the matter.—I am happy that the honour of acquainting your Ladyship devolves on me.—The entrance of their Majesties, for a moment interrupted him, but in the next, he returned to his subject—Heaven knows of how little importance I thought it, and with how little impatience I waited its continuation ; but when he said the Lady to be presented was niece to the Duke de Deni and the Count Aluredus, I began to feel rather more interested. I have often heard my mother speak of this family ; by a ridiculous intermarriage, they stood in that sort of relationship to her which the vulgar distinguish by the appellation of first cousins.



sins.—I am the worst genealogist in the world; all I can tell you is this, that a sister of this very Duke de Deni, being ill used in France, eloped from her family and put herself under the protection of my grandmother, married an indigent man of quality, was reduced to beggary, and was consequently thrown off by all her English connections. — On reading another page in the foolish folio, I found out that a Phoenix had sprung from the ashes of this reduced relation, and that she was the very person to be presented; and more, that Mademoiselle Aluredus was on the eve of becoming Countess of Derwent.—I thought I should have sunk—ill mannered wretch!—What detestable information did he give me!

I asked him in a tone of doubt, mingled with scorn, if I might depend on  
his

his intelligence? or if, like the Brussels Gazette, I was to expect a contradiction in the next paragraph.—He assured me upon his honour it was true, and, by way of sweetening the pill, added, that the Duke and Count were to make the present fortune of their niece a hundred thousand pounds.—As he stuttered out this last mighty pleasant anecdote, the eyes of the whole circle were directed towards the entrance, and my head mechanically turned the same way. I felt petrified with astonishment and rage; it was very lucky I did not burst into tears of vexation when the features of this dazzling beauty, this hundred thousand pounder, and what is a million times worse, this destined wife of my adored Derwent, recalled to my memory the woman whose humble situation once prompted me to insult her.—Yes, Lady Hassard!

Hassard!—it is true, it is fact, that Olivia, the bone-picker of Lady Mortington, is the prodigious fine Lady I saw presented under the most flattering distinctions, and who attracted more admiration in one minute than has fallen to my lot in my whole course of study to engage it;—this, even this, I could have born without feeling the absolute tortures of madness, had not this treacherous heart of mine told me truths insufferable.—Why does it force me to confess, that this Mademoiselle is more beautiful than all the beauties my eyes were ever vexed with?—Her dress corresponded with the elegance of her figure; her gown was light blue satin, so exactly matched to the colour of her eyes, that I am apt to suppose she carried them into Spitalfields as a pattern—no diamonds, no gold, no silver, all plain to a degree of plainness,

ness, the trimmings entirely composed of pearls, girl! ear-rings, necklace, and buckles, also pearls; her head had no other ornament than a large pearl sprig, formed to represent lilies of the valley; in her bosom, natural rose-buds, with sprigs of myrtle in blossom, completed her drapery, and more than completed my defeat.

The Duke and Count appeared rather in the light of idolaters than uncles, particularly the latter;—why did they not keep her in France? She has set the whole mass of my blood in a ferment—yes, I shall die—absolutely die of a mortification.—Derwent was odiously ridiculous whilst his Mademoiselle was presenting; I thought his heart would leap out of his bosom; and fly across the room to prostrate itself at the feet of its idol;—the fondness with which  
he

he followed the enchantress with his vile love-fraught glances, was positively quite unbred and downright provoking.—Now would I give any thing but my vivacity to know how Lady Mortington takes all this mighty pretty affair.—I swear she still doats on Derwent; and what the gipsy saw pass between them at Cornelly's, Lady Alice Sinclear ceases not to remember.—I will submit to give my hand and fortune to Fame;—by the bye, Lord Robert is more and more importunate. Well, I say I will even marry him, if I can devise no means less intolerable to make him assist me in propagating to the world, that Lady Mortington's conversation with her lover at the masquerade was not on indifferent subjects.

I can't put these vile French folks out of my head; their odious Made-  
moiselle,

moiselle, I understand, was to have been Countess of Derwent last Thursday, but the fair idiot chose to put it off till her dear Lady Mortington was enough recovered to grace the ceremony;—some people say she is no fool; but this, however, is no proof of her wisdom;—a rival who has gone such lengths was much more to be avoided than courted—but what have I to do with them? Let them, if they will, marr their own happiness; it would be a noble revenge for the pangs I have suffered;—if they do not torment each other, I am woefully afraid they are so far out of Fortune's reach, that no foreign plagues will be able to affect their felicity. I am neither in humour with myself or any body about me; but my dear Lady Hassard, I am your's in spite of peevishness, disappointment, and all the horrors of despair.

LETTER

## LETTER XXXVI.

*Lord Derwent to Sir Philip West.*

**LOOK** up, my friend, and behold me placed on the tiptoe of Fortune's eminence.—My lovely wife, by whose hand I reached this summit, stands smiling by my side.—The sun of prosperity glows upon us; ten thousand loves are enlisted in our service; the roses of peace spring up under our feet.—Exalted so much above the rest of mankind, my head grows giddy with surveying the vast expanse of happiness that surrounds me.—I am not in a humour for long letters; it is enough, if I can tell you, that I am the husband of my adored Aluredus, and that my transports have not reduced me to an absolute state of insanity.

F I N I S.

WICK, Printer,  
gate-street.

